

THE NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AND
REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AND REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS, by Captain Ziga Pretnar, Slovenian Armed Forces, 125 pages.

The region of the Western Balkans represents a major political, social, economic, and cultural crossroad in Europe and is hence subject to many conflicting interests. The National Guard State Partnership Program (NG SPP) is a security cooperation program run by the National Guard Bureau in support of the Combatant Commanders' Theater Security Cooperation Plan. The program received praise by numerous key stakeholders, U.S. and foreign, as well as scrutiny from Congress regarding a lack of metrics to assess effectiveness. This thesis examines the security environment in the Western Balkans, analyzes the NG SPP as a security cooperation program, and investigates how effectiveness is measured. This thesis also looks at regional security in the Western Balkans and analyzes its implications.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	viii
TABLES	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Assumptions.....	4
Definition of Terms	5
Limitations and Scope	8
Significance of the Study.....	8
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Security Situation in the Western Balkans	12
The Story of the NG SPP	18
Measuring Effectiveness of the NG SPP	23
Regional Security.....	27
Conclusion	31
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	32
Research Design	32
Evaluation Criteria—A Four-Step Approach	34
Step 1: Security Situation in the Western Balkans	34
Step 2: Story of the NG SPP.....	34
Step 3: Measuring Effectiveness of the NG SPP	35
Step 4: Regional Security.....	36
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS	37
Introduction.....	37
Step 1: Security Situation in the Western Balkans	39
Political Domain—The EU, United States, and Other Actors	40
Military Domain—Alliances and Western Integration.....	44

Economic Domain—The Enemy Within	47
Physical Environment—Strategic Location and Russian Desires	49
Conclusion	53
Step 2: The Story of the NG SPP.....	55
Introduction.....	55
What is the NG SPP?	56
Albania and the New Jersey NG	61
Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Maryland NG	62
Kosovo and the Iowa NG.....	63
Macedonia and the Vermont NG	64
Montenegro and the Maine NG	65
Serbia and the Ohio NG.....	66
Conclusion	67
Step 3: Measuring Effectiveness of the NG SPP	68
Introduction.....	68
Issues with the Evaluation Process	70
Current Available Metrics for Measuring Effectiveness	72
Additional Options for Metrics	76
Conclusion	84
Step 4: Regional Security	85
Introduction.....	85
Current Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans	85
RAF.....	90
NG SPP Implications	92
Conclusion	97
Conclusion	97
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	99
Introduction.....	99
Conclusions.....	100
Recommendations.....	104
Areas for Further Study	108
BIBLIOGRAPHY	110

ACRONYMS

AOR	Area of Responsibility
CIV-CIV	Civilian to Civilian Relations
COCOM	Combatant Command
DOD	Department of Defense
DODI	Department of Defense Instruction
EU	European Union
EUCOM	US European Command
GAO	Government Accountability Office
MIL-CIV	Military to Civilian Relations
MIL-MIL	Military to Military Relations
MOE	Measures of Effectiveness
MOP	Measures of Performance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
NG	National Guard
NGB	National Guard Bureau
RAF	Regionally Aligned Forces
SC	Security Cooperation
SPP	State Partnership Program

TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Examples of SC MOE.....	25
Table 2. Examples of SC MOP.....	26
Table 3. Areas of Potential Interest to Congress.....	57
Table 4. Examples of NG SPP SC Activities.....	58
Table 5. List of NG SPPs in the Western Balkans.....	61

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

If there is ever another war in Europe, it will come out of some damned silly thing in the Balkans.

— Otto von Bismark, quoted by Winston S. Churchill in the House of Commons

The National Guard State Partnership Program (NG SPP) is run by the Department of Defense (DOD) and managed by the National Guard Bureau (NGB). In essence, it links a state's NG with the armed forces of a partner country in a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship. The program is administered by the NGB, guided by State Department foreign policy goals and executed by the state adjutants general in support of combatant commander and US Chief of Mission security cooperation (SC) objectives and DOD policy goals.

It originated over twenty years ago, on the remnants of the fallen iron curtain, as a SC tool in the newly independent Baltic States. What sparked the program was a request from the Latvian government for support in developing their military based on the NG's citizen-soldier model. Key US. military leaders embraced the concept as a way to build partnerships with non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries in the region and facilitate cooperation across all aspects of international civil-military affairs and encouraging relationships at the state level. The predominant reasons for utilizing the NG for the task of executing the SPP was its inherent citizen-soldier nature, long-term oriented commitment and intrinsically small footprint it leaves. In the early 1990s, an active duty military presence in the Baltic countries might have sparked Russian concerns about U.S. expansion into its former satellites.

What started off as a regional initiative in Europe, evolved over more than two decades into a global program with sixty-five unique partnerships worldwide. The aim of the NG SPP is to promote access, enhance military capabilities, improve interoperability and enhance the principles of responsible governance. In addition, the NG SPP supports several interests of the US Congress such as helping prevent failed states and creating stable regions; improving the capabilities of partner nations to protect its citizens; strengthening relationships to facilitate access and interoperability; improving cultural awareness and skills among the US military personnel; and fostering the integration of reserve and active component forces into a total force. The NG SPP is recognized by the senior military leaders, US government officials, and the leadership of partnering nations.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of the NG SPP in regional cooperation. The purpose is not to evaluate the justification of the program, but rather to examine ways to leverage the program in order to better support national goals with an emphasis on regional security.

This study uses the Western Balkans as a regional example. It assesses the current security environment in the Western Balkans and analyzes how the NG SPP addresses those prevalent issues within its capacity. The current situation, coupled with applied lessons from the past, provides a clearer picture of the security needs in the immediate and long-term future. The issues at hand are the NG's SPP and its effectiveness, the regional security situation in the Western Balkans, and the role of the NG SPP in it.

The reported cost-effectiveness and operational success of the NG SPP, coupled with a preponderance of regional instability and the fragility of the security environment in the Western Balkans, lead to the primary research question for this thesis: how

effective is the NG's SPP in promoting synergetic regional security in the Western Balkans? Three secondary questions will help frame the answer to the primary research question. The first secondary question aims at the region of the Western Balkans and asks, why does the region of the Western Balkans still matter? The second secondary question is linked directly to the NG SPP: how does the NG measure the effectiveness of its SPP and what are the desired outcomes? The third secondary question focuses on the linkage between NG SPP and the enhancement of regional security: what are the current and potential implications of the NG SPP on regional security? Further analysis of the above mentioned secondary research questions will determine the means and ways of measuring effectiveness of the program, as well as explore the benefits of the program working on a regional basis.

In terms of measuring the effectiveness of the NG SPP, this thesis will look at the past, present, and potential future ways of assessing the program. First, the study will analyze the currently available resources for measuring effectiveness. Second, a closer look will be given at the criteria for measuring effectiveness on a regional level. This study will also look at other similar SC projects in order to compare the evaluation process and find similarities in terms of regional criteria. In order to acquire an overarching perspective, an overview of how institutions outside of the US Army measure effectiveness of their programs will be given.

In terms of assessing the linkage between the NG SPP and regional security, this research will center on existing programs promoting regional security and connecting the countries of the region closer together. Of significant importance will be the outcomes of the analysis pertaining to recommended cooperation between the international

community and the countries of the region. The study will specifically focus on the role of the NG SPP as a SC program, and analyze whether or not the program has an impact on regional cooperation, specifically in the Western Balkans. The study will also explore potential ways to better integrate the NG SPP into the endeavor of promoting regional stability. The sense of regional connectivity is especially important in the Western Balkans due to the turbulent history of the area, a conglomerate of ethnic entities, and recent socio-economic shifts. In a deeper sense, both historically and culturally, the Western Balkans encompass a territory with a vast cultural diversity, religious assortment, and a powder keg of resilient nationalistic fervor and identities. The only proper format to describe the situation in the Balkans, at any particular time in history, is—calm but fragile. The focus of this study will be less about responding to ‘why,’ but more so on answering the question ‘what’ is happening in this part of the world. The Western Balkans has been a source of turmoil and an ever-growing potential for unrest within Europe and beyond. The recent economic earthquakes and the resulting sparks of unrest have yet again proven that the potential for instability is still alive. With the US military carefully rightsizing its forces and efforts overseas, there is an increasing need to look at the problem of security in the Western Balkans, and effectively leverage the SC programs to better meet the needs of the US government and the region as a whole.

Assumptions

An assumption regarding the NG SPP is that the administrative structure and the general standing of the SPP will not change significantly during the course of the study. The doctrine used in this research will remain generally the same for the foreseeable future. The potential changes to the aforementioned doctrine will not affect the analysis

or results of this study. This thesis uses only open source documents and omits any internal or working documents pertaining to the subject of the thesis.

Definition of Terms

Area of Responsibility (AoR): the geographical area associated with a combatant command (COCOM) within which a geographic combatant commander has authority to plan and conduct operations.¹

Building Partner Capacity: the outcome of comprehensive inter-organizational activities, programs, and sustained military engagements over time that enhance the ability of partners for security, governance, economic development, essential services, rule of law, and other critical government functions.²

Combatant Command (COCOM): nontransferable command authority, which cannot be delegated, of a combatant commander to perform those functions of command over assigned forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces; assigning tasks; designating objectives; and giving authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish the missions assigned to the command.³

¹ Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02, *Terms and Military Symbols* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, September 2013), 1-3.

² Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2013), 1-13.

³ HQDA, ADRP 1-02, 1-11.

Congressional Research Service (CRS): works exclusively for the US Congress, providing policy and legal analysis to committees and members of both the House and Senate, regardless of party affiliation.⁴

Government Accountability Office (GAO): is an independent, nonpartisan agency that works for Congress. Often called the “congressional watchdog,” GAO investigates how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars.⁵

Measures of Effectiveness (MOE): a criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an endstate, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect.⁶

Measures of Performance (MOP): a criterion used to assess friendly actions that is tied to measuring task accomplishment.⁷

National Guard State Partnership Program (NG SPP): a DOD SC program run by the NG and executed through COCOMs. It links US states with partnering countries in order to promote SC.⁸

⁴ Library of Congress, “Congressional Research Service Careers,” accessed December 1, 2014, <http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo>.

⁵ US Government Accountability Office, “About GAO,” accessed December 1, 2014, <http://www.gao.gov/about/index.html>.

⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, Joint Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 2011), GL-13.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Lawrence Kapp and Nina Serafino, Congressional Research for Congress, R41957, *The National Guard State Partnership Program: Background, Issues, and Options for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 15, 2011), 1.

Near East: the countries of Southwest Asia and Northeast Africa—sometimes used interchangeably with Middle East, which has become the more common term.⁹

RAND Corporation: a nonprofit global policy think tank formed by Douglas Aircraft Company to offer research and analysis to the US Armed Forces.

Security Cooperation (SC): all DOD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.¹⁰

United States European Command (EUCOM): one of nine unified COCOMs of the US military. EUCOM's AOR covers fifty-one countries. Its mission is to conduct military operations, international military engagement, and interagency partnering to enhance transatlantic security and defend the United States forward.¹¹

The Western Balkans: This study will follow the European Union (EU) definition of the Western Balkans, which covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Kosovo under United Nations Security Resolution

⁹ Merriam Webster Dictionary, “Near East,” accessed November 2, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/near%20east>.

¹⁰ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JPS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 2010), ch. 1, 10.

¹¹ United States European Command, “Background,” accessed September 19, 2014, <http://www.eucom.mil/mission/background>.

1244, Montenegro and Serbia. With the exception of Albania, they were all a part of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.¹²

Limitations and Scope

This study will focus on its analysis of the NG SPP and will not attempt to delineate broader history of the societies of the Western Balkans. Even though there is ample reason to go into research of the latter, there is not enough time at hand to undergo such a massive project.

The particular NG SPP analyzed will be from EUCOM's AOR. There are many other examples of NG SPP around the globe, in other COCOMs. In order to keep research focused, the study will remain in EUCOM's AOR.

The scope of the research is limited also due to the time available to conduct it. This thesis has been conducted over the course of one year, during attendance at the US Army Command and General Staff College.

Significance of the Study

The reason for the NG SPP, from its very beginning, has been to make the best attempt to prevent conflict from erupting. This was going to be achieved through close cooperation with individual countries, and what started in Europe spread across the world. The operational environment after the fall of the Berlin Wall called for a need to spread the US sphere of influence to the countries emerging underneath the fallen Iron Curtain. For over twenty years the NG SPP strengthened relationships and continuously

¹² European Union External Action, "EU Relations with the Western Balkans," accessed October 17, 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/western_balkans/index_en.htm.

developed new ones. The program evolved, expanded, and kept its significance among other SC efforts. The question at hand is not whether the NG SPP justifies its existence, there is currently no substantial evidence which would dispute that. The important question is how to adjust and realign the NG SPP in order for it to be successful in face of a changing world. It is the matter of leveraging the resources and operational value of the program in a way to help prevent conflicts from occurring. The past decade has been marked by an influx of regional conflicts across the globe. The importance of securing relationships, not only with individual sovereign nations, but rather with entire regions has never been greater. Exploring the potential of the NG SPP with regards to regional cooperation is the principal significance of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent of regional cooperation of the NG SPP, particularly in the Western Balkans. The purpose is not to evaluate the justification of the program but rather to examine in what ways to leverage the program in order to better support US national goals with an emphasis on regional security.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the current and relevant literature with regards to the NG SPP. Specifically, the focus of this chapter is on the relevant literature pertaining to the NG SPP as a SC program, its relation to the promotion of regional security and the analysis of the security environment in the Western Balkans. The underlying point of the literature review is to identify and describe the literature which is relevant to the topic in question, identify commonalities and gaps in research, and analyze how this thesis fits into current research done on this topic. In effect, this chapter identifies and describes the sources which help answer the primary question: how effective is the NG's SPP in promoting synergetic regional security in the Western Balkans?

The literature review consists of the following four segments: Security Situation in the Western Balkans, The Story of NG SPP, Measuring Effectiveness of NG SPP, and Regional Security. All four segments include sources derived from books, articles, professional journals, and other prior research conducted on the aforementioned topic.

The first part of literature review, Security Situation in Western Balkans, focuses on sources regarding the security environment in this particular region and identifies commonalities. This part of the chapter serves as an overview of the current security

situation in the Western Balkans and attempts to analyze the environment in terms of the operational variables or Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure, Physical Terrain, and Time, also known as PMESII-PT.

The second part of this chapter, The Story of the NG SPP, focuses on describing the program. It gives a historical background on the origins of the program and describes the reasons behind establishing the program over twenty years ago. It also identifies the program's goals and objectives and how they have evolved over the past two decades. Besides looking at the history of the program, this segment of the literature review also describes the current activities of the program within the realm of SC.

The third segment of this chapter, Measuring Effectiveness of NG SPP, describes the literature and research available on measuring the effectiveness of the program. This part identifies the ways and means by which the program may be evaluated. It describes the research on the currently used MOE and MOP, as well as methodology used to assess the program.

The fourth part of the literature review, Regional Security, delineates the literature and research conducted on the elements of regional security. This segment of the chapter describes the sources on the NG SPP's relationship with regional security and its application. It also explores examples of other regional security programs in order to find commonalities and gaps therein. A specific emphasis is given on the concept of Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF), the literature pertaining to its relationship with NG SPP and the impact the two might potentially have on each other.

Security Situation in the Western Balkans

Many accounts are written on the overall situation in the Western Balkans as well as on specific countries of the region. Both books and journals describe the region of the Western Balkans with a hint of positive change and concern at the same time. These sources range from EU think tanks' security studies to US policies. Most notably, there seems to be a common thread of citing issues regarding the burdens of historical and recent war legacies, which are still persistent today. Common to most countries of the region are also the shortcomings of newly formed democracies. These would include weak governmental systems and rule of law, and slow economic modernization. The question of regional stability is at the forefront as a concern of outside countries and international organizations. The potential for increase in hostilities in one of the many hotspots of the region is very much present. In case turmoil is sparked, there is a calculated concern among observers, that the potential for spillover of hostilities from one country to another is great. This calls for a stronger emphasis on the promotion of regional security in order to ensure a lasting and prosperous peace and stability, not only for the immediate neighbors but also for Europe as a whole.

An extensive report by Janusz Bugajski, *Return of the Balkans: Challenges to European Integration and U.S. Disengagement*, assesses the current security situation in the Western Balkans, and examines the prospects for further turbulence and conflict in the Western Balkans. Bugajski makes a point that despite EU's increasing efforts to promote security, stability in the Western Balkans cannot be guaranteed without the presence of American troops. In his analysis, he warns of potential nationalist and revisionist forces who could raise their profiles and provoke fresh conflicts in the

Western Balkans in the absence of European military deterrents and decreasing US engagement.

Bugajski warns of another potential actor in the dynamics of the Western Balkans. A similar threat lurks at Europe that caused the creation of NG SPP in 1993 in the Baltic region. Now twenty years later, the successor of that threat is looking at the European space again, this time from the southeast. Russia sees an opportunity to expand its influence in the Western Balkans in light of EU's economic crisis and political indecision. The United States downsizing its presence in Europe creates a lucrative vacuum for Russia to fill. Of all the countries in the Western Balkans, Serbia is Russia's strongest link to the region. Moscow exploits Serbia's grievances towards NATO and EU, as well as Belgrade's position to Kosovo and the increasing reliance of the region on Russian energy and trade. Russia promotes its attempts to forge a pan-Slavic Orthodox unity under their patronage throughout the region, and in terms of economic dependency, Russia proposed an alternative to Serbia in the form of its planned Eurasian economic bloc. The dynamics of Russian intervention in the Western Balkans pose a direct threat to regional stability in the Western Balkans and a need for the United States to expand its sphere of influence in the region again.

Bugajski's analysis of causes and consequences of domestic and regional disputes in the Western Balkans, drives the idea that even after eleven years since the last conflict in the region ended, long-term stability and security in the region are not fully assured and may be threatened by internal as well as external factors. Of a number of causes described by Bugajski, a few stand out as very interesting in relation to the topic of this thesis. International exclusion, for example, would significantly threaten security in the

Western Balkans through decreasing, if not completely abolishing Europeanization and strengthening marginalization of the region. SC programs, such as the NG SPP, could contribute to countering other causes of conflict, such as EU's shortcomings in its ability to provide hard power or even a feasible economic model, as well as help mitigate the problem of inadequate leadership and counter the nationalist surplus building in the region. A very specific and interesting cause of potential conflict in the region is a generational challenge. In essence, there is no guarantee that the newer generation of key players in the region, who have not been exposed to the effects of war or have experience with it, will not resort to conflict. The ethnic divisions that are present in every aspect of human life, especially in a country like Bosnia and Herzegovina, need to be countered and diminished as models for these new generations. SC programs have the potential of contributing to the build-up of values and models for new generations to follow.

In his policy recommendations, Bugajski stresses the importance of the role of the US military in the process of assuring regional security in the Western Balkans. Specifically, he calls for the need to maintain US engagement and uphold a credible NATO presence. Promoting regional dialogue is one of the most important regional objectives in his recommendations. The NG SPP, due to its longtime presence in the countries of the region and the nature of the program, is well suited to serve in the role of a facilitator in promoting regional security.

In his article, "Revisiting Regional Security in the Western Balkans," Jim Seroka analyzes the contemporary security environment of the Western Balkans and emphasizes its transformation from the early 1990s until the present. He analyzes the US national security strategy towards the Western Balkans over the past two decades and identifies

the major shift of much of Washington's former concerns to the burden of Brussels. According to Seroka's research, there is ample room for improvement in the field of regional cooperation between the countries of the Western Balkans. Due to the nature of the NG SPP, assisting in both military and civilian matters, there is a potential opportunity for the NG SPP to contribute in the realm of regional partnering and cooperation.

The author describes the situational changes that occurred in the Western Balkans since the fall of Yugoslavia until present and analyzes them through an internal and external perspective. His analysis of the internal security reforms in the countries of the Western Balkans paints a more positive outlook of the region compared to other researchers. The governments of the Western Balkans have successfully demonstrated progress in efforts such as a profound demilitarization of the region, the virtual elimination of the threat of interstate conflict, the replacement of autocratic regimes with democratically inclined leaders, and adoption of pro-democratic institutions and practices. Most notably, the author analyzes, compared to the 1990s, there is no government that is seeking to expand at the expense of its neighbors, or threaten regional peace and security. Today's threats in the Western Balkans conceptually resemble the general threats to the majority of governments in the EU, such as terrorism, arms and human trafficking, international criminal activities, and other transnational threats.

The US support to the region, both military and non-military, has declined sharply. The security issues of concern to the United States have shifted from peacemaking to border security and law enforcement, and Congress has pushed the Western Balkans to the periphery of their concerns. The United States has shown

considerable willingness to transfer oversight and operational responsibilities of security in the Western Balkans to the EU. Even the *NATO Strategic Concept*, adopted in 2012, mentions the Western Balkans only in terms of support towards further European integration. The return to relative normalcy in the Western Balkans, Seroka notes, and the shift in global security priorities have reduced the security importance of the Western Balkans.

In his research, Seroka points out four regional security choices for the Western Balkans. The first option is regional balancing with Russia. The author recognizes the Russian Federation as a potential expansionist agent in the Western Balkans with an interest in expanding its sphere of influence. The particular target government of Russia is considered to be Serbia. However, the author largely dismisses this option saying that regional balancing with Russia makes little strategic or political sense for the countries of the Western Balkans or Russia itself. The reason for dismissal is the fact that all countries of the Western Balkans, except Serbia, have already rejected such a proposal from Russia, and for Russia to support a landlocked, relatively insignificant Balkan partner with no direct access would be cost-ineffective.

The second proposed security option for countries of the Western Balkans is to remain neutral. This option is also dismissed by the author partly due to the fact that both Albania and Croatia have already joined the alliance, and Montenegro and Macedonia have committed to join in the near future. This leaves only Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to play with the option of neutrality. However, neutrality as a national security policy (such as in Switzerland) would require such significant investments in the defense sector that it would cripple the economy of any country of the Western Balkans if

it was to protect its sovereignty. The option of significant reduction of the military to the point of abolishing a standing army and diverting only to a small internal security force (as the case of Costa Rica), would be politically unacceptable within the country.

The third security option for the Western Balkans is to seek to join the NATO alliance individually by country and on one's own terms. The author notes that for Serbia, this might be the only feasible option. However, in the post-Cold War environment, single small powers have very little chance of receiving special considerations and accommodations and it would be difficult to obtain the individualized attention it is seeking.

In Europe, the optimal feasible strategy for potential members to join NATO and seek European integration, is cooperative regional bargaining. An example of such a strategy was employed in the 1990s by the Visegrad Group consisting of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Another success story of group strategy is the Baltic group consisting of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The author analyzes that in such a group strategy there are prearranged understandings of who gets what, who does what, and what are the priorities of regional collectivity. A closer example to the Western Balkans is the Adriatic Charter. This particular regional cooperation program is of significant interest to this thesis. The Adriatic Charter was established by Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia in 2002 with the purpose of accelerating toward full membership in NATO. In 2008, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro joined the group and committed their nations to regional cooperation and collective security under the NATO umbrella. The Adriatic Charter, according to Seroke, has shown the effects of collective regional security in the Western Balkans and the advantages of regional-level cooperation with

NATO members. Nevertheless, the author points out in his analysis, the challenges of the Adriatic Charter. Most importantly to the topic of this thesis, unlike the Baltic and Visegrad groups, the Adriatic Charter lacks a regional institutional framework or caucus representing the interests of the Western Balkans in NATO.

The first important deduction from Seroka's research is that despite important improvements in the Western Balkans security situation, the process is not complete and the nations in the region are far from integrating as a region. The second significant conclusion is that without a new joint endeavor consisting of the EU, NATO, the United States, and the governments in the region, the integration process will slow down substantially if not come to a complete stop.

The Story of the NG SPP

The most comprehensive research on the NG SPP is derived directly from the source—the NGB. *The National Guard State Partnership Program, Annual Report FY 2013* describes the origins of the program and portrays the activities in the program's twenty years of existence. The program itself evolved from a EUCOM Decision in 1993 to form the Joint Contact Team Program, which was exclusively focused on the countries of the Baltic region. A following proposal from the NG to pair up NG units with the countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania marked the formal initiation of the program. What started in the EUCOM area, soon spread around the other COCOMs. The SPP currently maintains sixty-eight unique security partnership involving seventy-four countries across all regions of the world.¹³

¹³ National Guard Bureau, Division of International Affairs, *The National Guard State Partnership Program, Annual Report FY 2013* (Arlington, VA: National Guard

The other important contributor of valuable resources for the study of SPP is EUCOM and its strategic office. This is especially important because the study focuses primarily on the SPP relationships in the Western Balkans, which is under the sphere of the European theater. EUCOM states that their SPP “is a National Guard program that links U.S. States with partner countries in the European Theater for the purpose of supporting the security cooperation objectives of United States European Command.”¹⁴ There is ample evidence on the various activities and their impacts that the SPP contributed greatly to the regional security of its AOR. EUCOM’s annual reports lay out the major activities and accomplishments of the SPP within EUCOM’s AOR. From EUCOM’s standpoint, there is immense value in the SPP.

The 2014 “United States European Command (EUCOM) Theater Strategy” provides new theater objectives and priorities for EUCOM’s AOR and coupled with the guidance from the Commander in Chief and the Secretary of Defense, these objectives form the foundation for a revised Theater Campaign Plan. The “Theater Strategy” stresses the importance of effectively utilizing the limited resources in order to present a force that is ready to meet the needs of crisis response in a time of continued global turbulence. The strategy specifically emphasizes the need to focus attention along the southern and southeastern flanks of EUCOM’s AOR as well as preserving fundamental

Bureau, January 2014), accessed September 6, 2014, <http://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/SPP%20Annual%20Report%20FY13.pdf>.

¹⁴ Headquarters, United States European Command (HQ EUCOM), *State Partnership Program, 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 2013, 2, accessed September 5, 2014, www.eucom.mil/doc/25554/useucom-state-partnership-program.pdf.

relationships across Europe. In terms of regional cooperation, the “Theater Strategy” recognizes regional solutions across the AOR as necessary measures to meet the challenges. The strategy states, “increased regional cooperation on areas of mutual interest between Allies and partners improves the security of Europe as a whole – particularly in the Nordic-Baltic region, Central Europe, and across Southern Europe.” Significant to this study is also the fact that EUCOM’s strategy calls for more multilateral versus bilateral engagements in order to achieve success. EUCOM identifies the austere fiscal environment in which it has to operate and hence apply rigid fiscal discipline in prioritizing missions. At the same time, EUCOM realizes that in terms of the European allies’ view of the United States “virtual presence equals actual absence,”¹⁵ and deduces that the United States needs to leverage stateside-based rotational forces to supplement permanently assigned EUCOM components. In terms of the implementation of the strategy, EUCOM emphasizes the need to develop and maintain regional relationships that support our current and anticipated security interests and specifically points to the Balkans as one of the critical regions. Preserving strategic partnerships is one of the key theater priorities and is supported by maintaining regional stability and security as well as preserving partner capacity, capability, and interoperability. EUCOM’s 2014 “Theater Strategy” is significant to this research due to its relevancy in space and time as well as it representing guidelines for the NG SPP within the EUCOM AOR.

The DOD Instruction (DODI) Number 5111.20, Subject: State Partnership Program (SPP), published in 2012, “establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and

¹⁵ General Phillip M. Breedlove, Memorandum, “United States European Command (EUCOM) Theater Strategy,” Commander, United States European Command, December 6, 2013, 2.

provides instructions for the use of funds appropriated to the DoD to pay the costs of authorized SPP activities.”¹⁶ This instruction lays the foundation for NG SPP events and gives specific guidance on the roles and responsibilities in the conduct of events. It also sets in place a general system of reporting. This publication is significant because it defines what an SPP event is and it gives specific responsibilities to the Combatant Commander regarding the implementation of the program in his or her AOR. Such responsibilities require the Combatant Commander to review and approve all proposed SPP activities within his AOR; incorporate SPP activities as integral parts of theater SC plans; coordinate with relevant US embassy teams to obtain approval from the Chief of Mission; coordinate with the Chief of NGB in order to achieve the best use of NG resources; review, comment on, and provide coordination on all proposals to establish or disestablish partnerships; annually submit a detailed report of all SPP activities conducted within the AOR; assess the effectiveness of SPP activities in achieving theater SC objectives.

A report conducted by the Congressional Research Service titled *The National Guard State Partnership Program: Background, Issues, and Options for Congress* presents an overarching description of what the NG SPP is and what implications it has for the US government. According to the report, the NG SPP addresses several areas of potential interest to Congress such as improving the capabilities of partner nations to protect their citizens; strengthening relationships with partners to facilitate cooperation, access, and interoperability; improving cultural awareness and skills among US military

¹⁶ Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Department of Defense Instruction (DODI), Number 5111.20, State Partnership Program (SPP) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, December 14, 2012), 1.

personnel; and fostering the integration of reserve and active component forces into a total force.¹⁷

Even though the NG SPP is based on the same statutory authorities as the active component to conduct SC, it nevertheless brings some unique perspectives to the table. One distinctive aspects of the NG SPP is the potential for establishing enduring relationships between individuals in the state NG and their peers in the partnering country's armed forces. Another unique aspect of the NG SPP relates directly to the concept of citizen-soldier which creates the ability to share specialized expertise about topics such as disaster response, civil disorder, counter-narcotics operations, and border security. The third noteworthy aspect of the NG SPP is its ability to link senior officials of a state to senior officials of a foreign nation, which can open avenues for greater cooperation between the state and the partner nation in non-military affairs.

In addition to describing the program, this report also provides options for policymakers to adjust or change the program to meet potential new demands. Monitoring the implementation of the Directive Type Memorandum will allow Congress to determine whether it effectively defines appropriate activities and constrains unauthorized activities. The report also opts for Congress to direct periodic evaluations of the program in order to ensure that the SPP is contributing substantially to US objectives, and doing so in a cost-effective manner. Another recommendation is for Congress to require centralized approval of SPP activities. For example, currently the NGB exercises approval authority over any SPP activities it funds, except those funded by COCOMs. This poses a threat of potential mistakes in the administration of the program. The last

¹⁷ Kapp and Serafino, 1.

option for Congress from the report is to codify the NG SPP into law. The report calls for Congress to consider establishing specific parameters for SPP activities in law in order to alleviate confusion and potential approval of SPP activities that are outside the scope of the law.

The significance of this report is in its broad overview of the program, especially at pointing out the unique aspects of SPP. Particularly interesting to the topic of this research is a segment of the report which focuses specifically on the question whether the NG SPP is effective or not. This part of the report will serve as a source of information for the next segment of literature review.

Measuring Effectiveness of the NG SPP

In order to assess the effectiveness of the NG SPP as a SC program, the study looks at the current available assessment tools used to evaluate the program. Further, the study looks at the issues and concerns with current assessment procedures and examines the potential for additional considerations in measuring effectiveness of the NG SPP.

The 2012 National Defense Authorization Act directed the US GAO to study the NG SPP. The GAO set out to determine the extent to which SPP is meeting its goals and objectives, the types, frequency and funding of the program's activities, and potential challenges in the implementation of the program. The results of the research were summed in their report, GAO 12-548, *State Partnership Program Improved Oversight, Guidance, and Training Needed for National Guard's Efforts with Foreign Partners*. The GAO reached out to the major stakeholders in SPP with surveys, interviews, and specific questions regarding the program. The results of the report provide a range of first-hand information on the program's background and the benefits of SPP.

In terms of measuring the effectiveness of SPP, the most compelling finding is that due to inconsistency of data there is no uniformed method of evaluation of the SPP by DOD or Congress. According to the report, the program lacks a comprehensive oversight framework that includes clear program goals, objectives, and metrics to measure progress against those goals. Another significant challenge for the NG SPP is the concern of how to fund activities that include US and foreign partner civilian participants. Examples of such participants would include subject matter experts on military support to civil authorities. Due to the difficulties in understanding the funding of civilian participants, stakeholders are getting the impression that the US military is not permitted or willing to engage civilians in SPP activities. In reality, the operational need for civilian participation in SPP activities is increasing and policy makers are calling for greater emphasis on civil-military relations. This particular segment of the report, as well as measuring effectiveness, is analyzed in detail by Major Andrew Chandler in his research on this topic and serves as a basis for the study of measuring effectiveness of the SPP.

Looking at the US Army doctrine, the most pertinent information regarding the potential MOE for the NG SPP can be found in manuals outlining the Army's SC efforts and similar activities. One such doctrinal publication is Field Manual (FM) 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation*, which provides doctrine for Army support to DOD SC. It explains how Army forces conduct SC and it codifies the NG SPP as a partner capacity building, SC program under Title 10 United States Code. It further describes the NG SPP as a program which "links states with partner countries for supporting the objectives and goals of the geographic combatant command and the U.S. ambassador. The SPP actively

participates in training events, emergency management, environmental remediation exercises, fellowship-style internships, educational exchanges, and civic leader visits.”¹⁸

FM 3-22 provides examples for SC MOE and MOP. MOEs help the commander define if the unit is doing the right things, whereas MOPs helps confirm or deny whether a task is performed to standard, whether the unit is doing things right.

Table 1. Examples of SC MOE

<i>Security cooperation focus areas</i>	<i>Measure of effectiveness</i>
Operational capacity and capability building	Increased in units certified for a specific mission
Human capacity and human capital development	Increased number of training opportunities for desired skills
Institutional capacity and security sector Reform	Decreased reports of corruption
Support to institutional capacity and civil-sector capacity building	Increased ability of local agencies to prepare for and respond to local crises.
Multinational operations capacity, interoperability, and standardization	Increased usage of multinational forces in operations, exercises, or other activities
Operational access and global freedom of action	Reduced restrictions for access as identified in the status of forces agreement
Intelligence and information sharing	Increased shared intelligence reports
Assurance and regional confidence building	Increased maneuver notifications
International armaments cooperation	Increased acquisition of foreign technologies and cost-sharing
International suasion and collaboration	Increased positive media reporting of security cooperation events

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2013), 3-29.

¹⁸ Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2013), 2-5.

Table 2. Examples of SC MOP

<i>Security cooperation focus areas</i>	<i>Measure of performance</i>
Operational capacity and capability building	Training event conducted?
Human capacity and human capital development	Education course conducted?
Institutional capacity and security sector reform	Advisor embedded in partner country general staff?
Support to institutional capacity and civil-sector capacity building	Crisis management tabletop exercise conducted?
Multinational operations capacity, interoperability, and standardization	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) standard agreement adopted?
Operational access and global freedom of action	Status-of-forces agreement (SOFA) signed?
Intelligence and information sharing	Multinational network provided?
Assurance and regional confidence building	Hot-line communications in service?
International armaments cooperation	Armaments coordination agreement conducted?
International suasion and collaboration	Major annual regional security conference conducted?

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2013), 3-29.

The Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 11-31, *Army Security Cooperation Handbook*, provides a detailed and comprehensive guidance on SC planning and assessment requirements. It details the Army SC functions and implements the SC approach, planning, resourcing, execution, and evaluation. It explains the procedures of the SC programs. It outlines the NG SPP and clearly defines its tasks and purpose, as well as its SC focus area.

In his research, Major Andrew Chandler examines the SPP and focuses specifically on MOE. He looks at a US GAO report, *State Partnership Program Improved Oversight, Guidance, and Training Needed for National Guard's Efforts with Foreign Partners*, and uses it as his primary document for his thesis and bedrock for determining whether MOE for the SPP exist or not. He finds that no published methodology to measure the effectiveness of the SPP is currently in effect. He points out that this report highlights the need for a DOD-led SPP evaluation methodology in order

to establish proper and uniform MOE. The author nevertheless reveals that there are procedures in place that could be used for measuring effectiveness. These procedures are outlined in both DA PAM 11-31 and FM 3-22 and refer to the evaluation criteria for SC programs. A very interesting aspect of the author's research is his proposal of a Regional Partnership Program or a similar concept. This notion stems from the huge diversity of individual SPP relationships. Looking at the Western Balkans, combining SPP effects under a regional umbrella may be the answer to a more effective SC across the region. This study will serve as the basis of research conducted on the MOE for the NG SPP.

Regional Security

The idea of connecting SPPs on a regional level is not new. It is also not to say that the SPP, in conjunction with combatant commanders, did not engage in regional activities over the past twenty years of its existence. Each COCOM is riddled with various regional SC activities and events, such as conferences, initiatives, exercises, and training events. What the regional partnership concept presents is a unique level of regional coordination for the NG SPPs of a particular region. COCOMs are already responsible for coordinating the SPP within their AOR. The EUCOM SPP, for example, is a subcomponent of the larger NG program and it partners US states with European countries. It is a component of the global SPP, however, this subcomponent already includes different partnerships over a vast AOR. A further breakdown into regions of EUCOM's AOR would potentially bring more cohesion, a narrower focus and a more specific set of mutually supporting objectives for that particular region.

In her US Army War College strategy research project on the NG European SPP, Lieutenant Colonel Karen Yatto writes about the potential of regional programs within

the SPP. Her study delineates benefits from regional cooperation not only for EUCOM and the partnering countries, but for the region as well. An example of successful regional cooperation is the case of Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland during their aspirations for NATO membership. The three countries had very similar needs and their goals were built around political, economic, security, legal, and defense resourcing approaches. Their needs were met on a regional basis and their bargaining power was substantially stronger due to their cooperation. They represent an open model for potential future aspirants to NATO. Since many aspects of the operational environment spill across borders and are present in multiple countries of a region, addressing those issues with a single and well-coordinated regional plan leads to consolidation of resources, a cost-effective approach and creates a regional environment which fosters mutual cooperation.¹⁹

In his strategic research paper, “Enabling Theater Security Cooperation Through Regionally Aligned Forces,” Colonel Kristian Marks gives an all-encompassing overview of the concept of RAF and its implementation. In essence, the concept of RAF took several years to develop, and it emerged out of the need for additional forces in geographic COCOMs since the War on Terror demanded the preponderance of the fighting force to go to US Central Command. By 2010, the concept was known as the Regionally Aligned Brigade model and was designed specifically for theater SC. By 2012, the concept grew and evolved into the RAF. The expansion of the concept was mainly due to growing needs of the operational environment and the realization of senior

¹⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Karen L. Yatto, “The National Guard European State Partnership Program: Refocusing for Increased Effectiveness and Expanded Missions” (Strategic research project, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2003), 16.

military leaders that a brigade-sized element would not suffice. Many of the capacity building needs required by partner nations required specialized capabilities not part of a brigade combat team's force structure.

The author analyzes the concept of RAF in terms of capability, capacity and continuity that the program would provide to the combatant commanders. Significant to this research is his finding that the implementation of RAF will increase the ability of the US military to maintain a regional focus. Besides multifaceted benefits that the RAF brings, there are limitations to the program as well. One of the limitations of the RAF concept is the potential for military dominance in foreign policy. The author argues that with the RAF asset at the geographic combatant commander's disposal, he will have additional leverage and pressure to produce SC results faster and more effectively. Colonel Marks warns of the misuse of the RAF concept and the fact that it may become counterproductive if not used with long-term implementation in mind. Another potential limiting factor may be the partnering nations and their willingness to cooperate. To most partnering nations, this will be yet another, additional, SC program which will require them to allocate time and resources.

Colonel Marks' study is significant to this research because it outlines the SC concept of RAF and provides gaps in the implementation of it. His research opens many potential questions about how these gaps could be filled and which other SC program may complement the concept.

In his book, *Exporting Security: International Engagement, Security Cooperation, and the Changing Face of the U.S. Military*, Derek S. Reveron provides an analysis of the US military efforts to prevent or at least reduce the security deficits around the world. In

his work he advocates a whole of government approach to solving security problems in various regions worldwide. An interesting point in his research is his analysis that the short-term focus might be the fatal flaw in US security assistance programs due to the fact that it is the long-term commitment that takes countries to develop. He specifically states that what inhibits long-term investment, required to build sustainable programs, are biannual military personnel rotations and annual budgets. The author also discusses and warns of the increasing tendency of militarizing foreign policy or at least giving the impression of doing so. The burden sharing between DOD and Department of State is the root cause of that phenomena.

In his analysis, the author describes the security assistance tools available to each combatant commander. The most prevalent programs are the International Military Education and Training and Foreign Military Financing. The Foreign Military Financing supplies grant and loans to finance American weapons and military equipment and it augments the military training and education. The COCOMs also offer direct military assistance using the Joint Combined Exchange Training. An example of this program is using special operations personnel teaching foreign militaries how to combat insurgencies, drug trafficking, and rescue hostages.

Particularly interesting to this research is his segment on SC analysis. The author uses the example of the NG SPP as an effective way for a military organization to conduct civil-military and stability operations in targeted regions. The aspect of the NG's citizen-soldier concept is appealing as a security assistance tool and is more easily accepted by foreign nations.

Conclusion

In summary, the body of knowledge with regards to the NG SPP, security environment in the Western Balkans, and the concept of regional security is fairly extensive. What this particular research is able to add to this pool of knowledge are specific variances regarding the aforementioned topics, specifically concerning the NG SPP. In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the NG SPP, literature and prior research point out that there is a deficiency within the program for a common and uniform evaluation process and criteria. Specific segments of this process are currently being assessed by appropriate authorities. However, since the publishing of the GAO report in 2012 there have been no implementations of any changes to date. This research will explore the notion of measuring effectiveness of NG SPP and will address that very question. As far as the security environment in the Western Balkans goes, there has been a decline in attention to this particular part of the world in the past decade. This research will expose the operational environment in the Western Balkans as it stands today and point out potential causes of friction in the future. In terms of regional security, this research will address the potential benefits of the NG SPP in this undertaking. Specifically, this research will attempt to fill the gap of knowledge regarding a concept of regional partnership program, an idea of connecting SPPs of the same region under the same operational umbrella. In addition to that, this research will explore the potential benefits of a strong relationship between the NG SPP and the concept of RAF and how they are able to complement each other to project an effective security strategy to a specific region.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent of regional cooperation of the NG SPP, particularly in the Western Balkans. The purpose is not to evaluate the justification of the program but rather to examine in what ways to leverage the program in order to better support US national goals with an emphasis on regional security. This chapter of the study will describe the methodology used in the research and the reasoning behind it. It consists of two parts—research design and evaluation criteria.

Research Design

Before going into the analysis of methodology, an important question to ask is why is the subject of this investigation so significant and why is it a problem? The subject of regional security in the Western Balkans and the implications of the NG SPP as a SC tool, as demonstrated in the first chapter, is a proper and relevant research problem for many reasons. As mentioned, the problem is relevant. In a time of increased budget constraints for the US military, and the shift in focus from the European theater to the Pacific, the subject of program effectiveness and cost-consciousness is of high importance. Despite the efforts of the EU to take on more responsibility of its internal and external security, the potential for a security vacuum is still present as the US footprint in Europe evolves and realigns. Relevancy extends to the region of the Western Balkans as well. Even though we have witnessed an immense shift in the security situation of the region in the last twenty years, it is still vulnerable to insecurity due to unsettled disputes, common threat of illegal activities, and the fragile economic security. The main issue that

this thesis is concerned about is regional cooperation and how effectively the NG SPP is engaged in it.

With the problem identified, it is important to set the limits of the stage on which this thesis will perform. Framing the problem allows gaining context and sets the conditions for subsequent analysis. In terms of location, the study will limit its research to the region of the Western Balkans. As far as analyzing the security environment in the region, this thesis will focus on the development of the region since the dissolution of Yugoslavia and will not attempt to go further in history. In terms of the NG SPP as a SC tool, the study will limit itself to the operational and strategic implications of regional security.

While conducting research for the topic of this thesis and sifting through the literature, the most important criteria determining validity of a specific piece of information was its credibility, completeness, and accessibility. With regard to these criteria, this thesis has examined, in its second chapter, all pertinent doctrine, policy, and other official documents as well as other prior research on the subject.

In the process of literature review, all information has been screened and evaluated against the collection criteria with the aim of answering the secondary questions pertaining to measuring effectiveness of the NG SPP and the implications of the NG SPP to regional security in the Western Balkans. The first and second chapters of this study have covered the introduction of the research problem and all the information collected to answer the research question. In the fourth chapter, this study will analyze the process of measuring effectiveness of the NG SPP, compare results of the program to

the desired outcomes and analyze the implications of the program to regional security. Following is a brief description of the research process.

Evaluation Criteria—A Four-Step Approach

Step 1: Security Situation in the Western Balkans

In order to put the subject of this thesis into regional context and better understand the complexities of the Western Balkans, the study will first look at the security situation in the region. Research conducted on the security environment of the Western Balkans will employ a descriptive method as well as historical research. The purpose for utilizing this method is in the need to paint a background, a situational backdrop for the thesis. The analytical lens, through which this descriptive method will be applied, uses the operational variables as its criteria. These variables are represented by the acronym PMESII-PT which stands for, Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure, Physical Terrain, Time, and are used by DOD to describe an operational environment. Additionally, historical research will be applied in assessing the current security environment in the Western Balkans in order to better understand the root causes for the diverse socio-political sphere that the region is engulfed in. Historical research is needed to describe both internal and external factors of security through the lens of operational variables.

Step 2: Story of the NG SPP

The second step of the analysis will be to explore the dynamics of the NG SPP as a SC program, specifically in the region of the Western Balkans. Descriptive historical research will be applied in order to deliver a holistic overview of the program from its

very beginnings, through the era of development and transformation, to the state in which it is today. The question that the study wants to ask, in this part of the analysis, is whether the NG SPP is meeting its goals and objectives. Are the desired outcomes of the program being met? The evaluation criteria will be the original aims of the SPP—promote access, enhance military capabilities, improve interoperability, and enhance the principles of responsible governance. The analysis of the NG SPP in terms of the program meeting its desired outcomes will be critical for a broader understanding of its effectiveness. Once the general analysis of the program is in place, a more detailed analysis of the specific metrics measuring the programs goals will be needed. This detailed analysis is described in the next phase as the study narrows into the realm of measuring effectiveness of the program.

Step 3: Measuring Effectiveness of the NG SPP

The next step in the analysis will be to examine the MOE of the NG SPP in detail and investigate to what extent the program is meeting them. This step is directly connected to the second secondary question of this study: how does the NG measure the effectiveness of its SPP and what are the desired outcomes? The study will use the metrics of broader SC programs, as described in FM 3-22. The manual on SC provides a detailed example of MOE for SC programs, describing the criteria to use for assessing whether or not the program is doing the right things. Once MOE for the NG SPP have been analyzed, the study will look at how the NG SPP is conducting its activities and compare that to the MOP as described in FM 3-22. MOP are a tool which assists commanders to determine whether the program is doing things right. With the NG SPP analyzed through the lens of measuring effectiveness, the study will expand its sphere of

analysis and attempt to determine how or to what extent the program is influencing regional security.

Step 4: Regional Security

Whereas in the second step of this analysis, the study will look at the NG SPP as a SC tool in detail, this particular step of analysis focuses primarily on how the NG SPP is affecting security on a regional level. Before going into specific analysis of the NG SPP's implications, this study will analyze the concept of regional security, how it evolved over the past twenty years and how it is framed, conducted, and assessed within EUCOM's AOR. The study will also briefly analyze the concept of RAF and how the two constructs of that concept, the active duty and the reserve or NG components, play their roles in enhancing regional security. Due to the current strategic and operating environments of the US military, the concept of RAF leads the way in SC across COCOMs due to its presumed cost-effectiveness and small footprint. As such, it is important to analyze the concept in detail and identify potential shortcomings or areas to improve.

The second part of this step in the broader analysis of the issue will consist of analyzing the implications of the NG SPP on regional security, particularly in the Western Balkans. The criteria for assessing the implications will be the current goals of the NG SPP as described in part 3 of the analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

In order to be able to answer the primary question of this thesis: how effective is the NG's SPP in promoting synergetic regional security in the Western Balkans? this chapter answers all the secondary questions, which in turn lead to the answer of the primary question. Three secondary questions will help frame the answer to the primary research question. The first secondary question aims at the region of the Western Balkans and asks, why does the region of the Western Balkans still matter? The second secondary question is linked directly to the NG SPP: how does the NG measure the effectiveness of its SPP and what are the desired outcomes? The third secondary question focuses on the linkage between NG SPP and the enhancement of regional security: what are the current and potential implications of the NG's SPP on regional security?

Introduction

The fourth chapter of this study will analyze the primary subject of the thesis and determine how effective the NG SPP is in promoting synergetic regional security in the Western Balkans. This analysis will only be possible once the groundwork and framing have been completed to set the environment for a focused investigation. The foundation for an effective analysis will be built through the four-step evaluation approach, as described above.

The detailed description and interpretation of the security environment in the Western Balkans will set the stage for further analysis of SC intricacies in the region. The analysis of the security environment will determine the importance of continued

engagement of the US military in the region and explore the potential ways of engagement in light of the current operating environment.

Throughout the analysis of the NG SPP as a SC program, this study will identify the NG SPP as one of the key actors in the realm of promoting security. Due to the fact that the NG SPP originated in EUCOM's AOR, this study will examine the program in this region and specifically look at how it evolved and adjusted to the needs of the region. This part of the study is important for another reason; it identifies the reasons and aims of the program and starts evaluating the outcomes. It also sets the stage for a more detailed analysis of the program, which follows.

Measuring effectiveness of the NG SPP will go into more detail on how the program is meeting its goals and objectives. The study of MOEs and MOPs will determine to what extent the program is effective, and even to what extent is it doing the things it was supposed to be doing. Special attention will be given to the notion of regional effects the program might have on the security environment in the Western Balkans. The question of regionally connecting the program through a set of goals or objectives specific to a region will be looked at. Regional SC and regional relationship building will be further addressed in the last step of the analysis.

The last part of the analysis looks at both components of the RAF to find similarities and differences in order to identify potential improvements to the RAF concept and increase the overall effectiveness of SC in EUCOM's area. The effects of regional SC will be examined as well as the role of the NG SPP in playing a part in this endeavor.

All the steps of the analysis combined will enable an objective view of the NG SPP as a SC tool and its implications on regional security in the Western Balkans. The last chapter of the study will draw conclusions, based on the analysis, and provide potential recommendations to the NG SPP and the realm of SC.

Step 1: Security Situation in the Western Balkans

The analysis of the security environment of the Western Balkans is conducted through the lens of operational variables. This approach examines an operational environment as a set of complex and constantly interacting political, military, economic, social, information and infrastructure as well as other systems (most commonly examined are also physical terrain and time). The nature and interaction of these systems determine the operational environment and affect actions taken by the stakeholders in that environment. All the aforementioned systems are interconnected and interrelated to various degrees; hence, a change in one of them will trigger effects in the others. The most significant characteristic of the operational variables are the blurred lines between them. As with any system, the operational variables change over time as well and need constant monitoring and deep understanding in order for stakeholders to be able to react and adjust their actions.²⁰ This thesis focuses on the variables of political, military, economic, and physical environment systems, in order to answer the first secondary question: why does the region of the Western Balkans matter?

²⁰ JCS, JP 3-0, ch. IV, IV-4.

Political Domain—The EU, United States, and Other Actors

Politically, the region of the Western Balkans collectively bridged an immense gap since the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The governments in the region have demonstrated considerable success in taking tangible political action to reduce inter-state tension. The profound demilitarization throughout the region; the virtual elimination of the threat of interstate conflict in the Balkans; the replacement of autocratic regimes with increasingly democratically inclined leaders; and the adoption of more democratic institutions and practices demonstrate the breadth and depth of the change. While the possibility of intra-societal conflict and violence erupting in Kosovo, Bosnia, or Serbia has not been eliminated, it is highly unlikely that widespread civic violence would break out again at anything approaching the level of intensity and criminality of the past.²¹

Despite these facts and a notion of success in the region, the 2014 Failed States Index, an annual ranking of 178 states based on their domestic security and indicators of risk, places the countries of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the “high warning” category (Macedonia, the next worst, is placed in the “warning” category).²² In these countries of the region, the political, social, and economic indicators express the potential for turmoil and present a state of fragility within the region, which could be set off balance and cause inter-communal tensions, violence, and possible insurgency.

In contrast to the period of the Cold War and the turbulent 1990s, the contemporary strategic importance of the Western Balkans and the involvement of the

²¹ Jim Seroka, “Revisiting Regional Security in the Western Balkans,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 25, no. 4 (2012): 494.

²² The Fund For Peace, “Fragile States Index 2014,” accessed November 2, 2014, <http://ffp.statesindex.org>.

great powers, particularly the United States, in Western Balkan affairs, has been sharply reduced. With more than a decade of relative peace, stability, and a gradual economic recovery, the attention of the United States has shifted elsewhere. As is the case with official policy, the current 2010 US *National Security Strategy* and the 2008 US *National Defense Strategy* make only a single passing reference to the Balkans, and they refer to Europe, NATO, or the EU only in reference to their out-of-Europe missions and contributions. Even NATO's new *Strategic Concept* adopted in 2010 mentions the Western Balkans only to reiterate its support for their eventual integration into Europe. In May 2012, at the NATO Summit in Chicago, the Western Balkan security environment was characterized as a NATO success story that has been largely resolved.²³

Accession into EU helps keep the process of democratic governance and reform on track—even though it might not be the sole goal, aspiration, or solution to the Western Balkans—it does without a doubt promote stability in the region and provides the region with a foundation on which to build the democratic frame. In the past decade, the United States continued to disengage from the region as the EU kept increasing its support and engagement. Instead of hard power, the EU's focus and modus operandi is the promotion of democratic governance and reform through the use of soft power—all of it relying on the framework of potential EU expansion. Part of the reason for this is the fact that EU faces immense limitations in its ability to maintain or project any type of hard power within or without its borders. With a potential policy of limiting EU accession and delaying of prospects for new members, the EU's key elements of soft power, political influence and economic power, may be fading as well. With no strong outside support

²³ Seroka, 496.

from either the EU or the United States, and the increasing internal tensions, the region could become a vacuum zone open for exploitation from a third party.

The potential stagnation in political affairs as well as a sluggish economic progress could greatly enhance the nationalistic fervor boiling under the surface of the region. According to Bugajski, the rise in political radicalism and nationalist extremism in the Western Balkans does not have the potential for an all-out-war. However, it may nevertheless create pockets of hostility, insecurity, and enough violence to disqualify the affected countries from EU membership. Such events would have a domino effect on the rest of the region and would exacerbate local and interstate disputes.²⁴ The most vivid example of political radicalism can be found in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After two decades of democratization, the country continues to struggle with inter-ethnic reconciliation and integrated statehood. Bosnia is divided along ethno-national lines, dividing ethnic Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. In over twenty years, no political elite that would transcend national divisions emerged. There is also a desperate lack of unification projects that would help bond the three nations within the state. This conundrum has a negative effect on the social aspect of the population. The younger generations, which were not exposed to multiethnic Yugoslavian culture, are bound to their ethnic groups with virtually no interaction with the other two ethnic groups in Bosnia. The educational system as well as youth movements are separated by ethnicity, which in turn leaves the young people susceptible to indoctrination and political manipulation.²⁵ A report from a

²⁴ Janusz Bugajski, "Return of the Balkans: Challenges to European Integration and U.S. Disengagement" (Report, Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, Carlisle, PA, May 2013), 142.

²⁵ Bugajski, 39.

consortium of European researchers summed in the *Almanac on Security Sector Oversight in the Western Balkans*, states that significant progress has been made in terms of security sector reform; however, there is a lack of capable management within the country. In addition, policy makers will need to overcome the legacy of undemocratic mentalities and procedures. Security institutions and personnel will need more time to adopt and internalize democratic values and principles.²⁶ A positive example from the Bosnian security sector reform may be their armed forces. As in every other sector of the government, after the war the army was divided into three completely separate organizations based on ethnicity. The country's armed forces of today are a unified professional army under one chain of command and subordinate to civilian control. This is not the case with the country's police force yet.²⁷ The Bosnian Armed Forces could serve as a model for successful integration in the country.

Politically, the region made significant gains toward a successful governing democracy; however, there is still a long way to go. Corruption, poor management, and a lack of reform interest still plague the internal political progress. At the same time, a rise in national radicalism is a cause for concern of the future of progress. With all of that in mind, the region calls for international support to promote democratic governance and enhance cooperation and positive coexistence, both internally and regionally.

²⁶ Denis Hadzovic and Dizdarevic, Emsad, "Bosnia and Herzegovina," in *Almanac on Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans*, eds., Franziska Klopfer and Douglas Cantwell with Miroslav Hadžić and Sonja Stojanović (Belgrade: Belgrade Centre for Security Policy and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2012), 65, accessed November 21, 2014, <http://www.dcaf.ch/Project/Western-Balkans-Civil-Society-Capacity-Building-to-Map-and-Monitor-SSR/%28show%29/resource>.

²⁷ Ibid., 50.

Military Domain—Alliances and Western Integration

Analyzing the region through the military lens of the operational variables is almost impossible to do on its own. This aspect is intrinsically linked to political, economic and even social aspects of the region. From this combined point of view, the US strategic perspective on the Western Balkans has been transformed, over the past decade, from seeing the region as a long-term burden and security consumer for the United States, to becoming an integral part of Europe and a contributor to Europe's security.²⁸ The governments of the Western Balkans have successfully demonstrated progress in efforts such as a profound demilitarization of the region, the virtual elimination of the threat of interstate conflict, the replacement of autocratic regimes with democratically inclined leaders, and adoption of pro-democratic institutions and practices.

The threats to the Western Balkans from the outside, as well as threats originating in the region, have changed over the past two decades. Today's threats in the Western Balkans conceptually resemble the general threats to the majority of governments in the EU, such as terrorism, arms and human trafficking, international criminal activities, and other transnational threats. For stakeholders within the region as well as for external actors, the key to solving these issues is in regional cooperation and gradual integration into Euro-Atlantic organizations. If the EU is the Western Balkans' chance of an economic revival, then NATO is the region's option for enabling a safe and secure environment and a framework for security reform.

²⁸ Seroka, 500.

In Europe, the optimal feasible strategy for potential members to join NATO and seek European integration is cooperative regional bargaining. An example of such a strategy was employed in 1990s by the Visegrad Group consisting of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Another success story of group strategy is the Baltic group consisting of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In such a group strategy, there are prearranged understandings of who gets what, who does what, and what the priorities of regional collectivity are. A closer example to the Western Balkans is the Adriatic Charter. This particular regional cooperation program is of significant interest. The Adriatic Charter was established by Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia in 2002 with the purpose of accelerating toward full membership in NATO. In 2008, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro joined the group and committed their nations to regional cooperation and collective security under the NATO umbrella. The Adriatic Charter has shown the effects of collective regional security in the Western Balkans and the advantages of regional-level cooperation with NATO members. The most significant challenge of the Adriatic Charter is that, unlike the Baltic and Visegrad groups, the Adriatic Charter lacks a regional institutional framework or caucus representing the interests of the Western Balkans in NATO.²⁹

Another challenge to NATO integration is the issue of the legal name of Macedonia for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the negative precedence of Greece's veto over it. Even though the issue may sound miniscule and negotiable, it poses an uncompromising hurdle on the track to NATO accession, especially when considering a group bargaining option for the Western Balkans. For as

²⁹ Seroka, 502-510.

long as there is no compromise between the two nations, a group bargaining option for NATO accession is out of the question.

In addition to NATO accession, the countries of the Western Balkans look at other western integration models for support. One such model is the EU and the other one is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Even though the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe combines aspects of military as well as political domains, it is regional stability which is the goal of the organization. All countries of the Western Balkans, except Kosovo, are among the participating states of the organization.³⁰ The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will continue its assistance in the Western Balkans as its presence will be necessary to ensure the democratization of these countries. Simultaneously, the goals of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are to ensure effective horizontal cooperation in the region.³¹

To put it briefly, militarily the countries of the Western Balkans are enhancing their military capabilities, mostly due to a desired prospect of eventually joining NATO. Those that already are in the alliance are increasingly turning from security consumers to security providers in the broader region. Those that still seek membership are on a good course. The armies were among the first to transform after the wars, and hence serve well as examples of integration and effective reform. In order to enhance interoperability,

³⁰ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Participating States," accessed November 23, 2014, <http://www.osce.org/states>.

³¹ Mirsada Hallunaj, "On the Importance of the OSCE and its Role in the Balkans," *International Policy Digest*, September 24, 2013, accessed November 23, 2014, <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2013/09/24/importance-osce-role-balkans>.

regional cooperation and eventual accession to NATO, countries of the Western Balkans should look toward SC programs that have in the past helped aspirants or groups of aspirants achieve membership. A great example of a successful driver of such cases is the NG SPP.

Economic Domain—The Enemy Within

Economic problems are a common phenomenon to the Western Balkans. The status of the economy in the EU, and most notably in the central and eastern European states, have an immense influence on the economies of the Western Balkans. One such example is the impact of the global credit crunch and economic recession, which has curtailed foreign investment, limited the availability of bank credits, and reduced worker remittances. Government debt, budget deficits, unemployment rates, and the number of citizens below the poverty level have soared, while economic growth rates have either decreased or remained static.

For example, the gross national debt in Serbia almost reached sixty-seven percent of gross domestic product in 2013 and forty-seven percent in Bosnia; unemployment was registered at forty-four percent in Bosnia, twenty-eight percent in Macedonia, thirty percent in Kosovo, and twenty percent in Serbia; while thirty percent of both, the Macedonian and Kosovo population, is registered below the poverty line.³² A protracted economic downturn, coupled with receding EU benefits and social inequalities, can stimulate populism and nationalism in several states of the region.

³² The Economist, “The Global Debt Clock,” accessed November 2, 2014, http://www.economist.com/content/global_debt_clock.

In fact, Europe's overall economic downturn may have negative consequences for the Western Balkans. The economy of the Western Balkan states is heavily dependent on foreign investment. With decreasing foreign investment and credits in the region, it will have a domino effect with the potential results of a decreased desire for EU enlargement, and a reinforcement of the Western Balkan reform fatigue.

As economic prospects in the Western Balkans are likely to diminish in the near term, disillusionment with the EU, as an institutional destination, may also spread. The EU's effectiveness as an institution builder and a factor of stability will come under greater scrutiny. This can occur at a time when the United States is preoccupied with more pressing crises outside Europe and calculates that it can only play a secondary role in the Balkans.³³

Economically, the region of the Western Balkans is marked by high rates of unemployment, immense debt, and meager prospects for the future. The conditions for reforms are not at a stage of fruition as the region is beset with counts of corruption, and a high level of mismanaged state-control business and capital, which chokes potential private investment. In addition to these problems, there is growing interest from the governments in the region to stray away from the traditional western capital and look for other potential sources of investment, mostly from stakeholders such as the Chinese, Qatari, Turkish, and Russian economic powerhouses.³⁴ A further discussion into these outside investors and their effects follows in the next part of the study.

³³ Bugajski, 3.

³⁴ Ditmar Bechev, "The Periphery of the Periphery: Western Balkans and the Euro Crisis" (European Council on Foreign Relations, Policy Brief, Berlin, Germany, August 2012), 5.

To summarize, economically the Western Balkans is in a vicious turmoil, which just might be the root cause for problems in all other aspects of governance and public affairs. The crippling effects that the Euro crisis had on the economy of the region stem from years of poor public management, state-owned capital and political guidance of state-owned businesses, endemic corruption practices, and a blatant disregard for long-term goals and effects. This environment caused an increase in social upheaval and dissatisfaction with the governments. In some cases the public, with some help from opportunistic politicians, turned against the EU and western institutions in search of a guilty party. The situation, which the governments of the Western Balkans have created over the years, is ripe for foreign intervention through investment, both proper and improper. The governments of the Western Balkans need guidance in fiscal management, an opportunity to show that they can play by the rules when given a chance—of course through a reasonable amount of oversight and control. A mere influx of capital in the region will not solve any issues. It would probably only make things worse. At this stage, it is most likely too late for an overarching and all-encompassing plan, such as was the Marshall Plan in Europe, but a limited guiding initiative with the backing of controlled foreign investment might get the region back on track and eventually instill a healthy managerial mentality.

Physical Environment—Strategic Location and Russian Desires

Concerning the physical environment, the Western Balkans is strategically located in southeastern Europe. It lies at the crossroads of vastly different cultures, as well as three main religions. It presents access to the Mediterranean in addition to linking east to west and north to south on the European continent. By the sheer fact that it represents

Europe's political, cultural, religious, social, and geographically strategic intersections, it inevitably triggers a myriad of conflicting interests. The location presents a critical pivot point at the crossroads of the Near East, the Black Sea area, and the Mediterranean. At the same time, the Western Balkans plays the role of a border region for the EU, the southeastern wing of NATO, and a critical part of EUCOM's AOR. The physical environment of the Western Balkans, specifically the location, intrinsically links the operational variables of political, economic, and social systems of the region.

Of all the outside actors, actual and potential, this study focuses only on the aspect of Russian influence in the Western Balkans. Russia sees an opportunity to expand its influence in the Western Balkans in light of EU's economic crisis and political indecision and the current hold on NATO enlargement. In addition, the United States downsizing its presence in Europe creates a lucrative vacuum for Russia to fill. Moscow's ambition to increase its sphere of influence at the gates of Europe is evident through the Russian use of diplomatic assertiveness, conflict prolongation, and economic dependence.³⁵

Of all the countries in the Western Balkans, Serbia is Russia's strongest link to the region. Moscow exploits Serbia's grievances towards NATO and EU, as well as Belgrade's position to Kosovo and the increasing reliance of the region on Russian energy and trade. Russia promotes its attempts to forge a pan-Slavic Orthodox unity under their patronage throughout the region, and in terms of economic dependency, Russia proposed an alternative to Serbia in the form of its planned Eurasian economic bloc. The dynamics of Russian intervention in the Western Balkans pose a direct threat to

³⁵ Bugajski, 134.

regional stability in the Western Balkans and a need for the United States to expand its sphere of influence in the region again.³⁶

If the Western community sees regional security in the Western Balkans as something desirable, Russia is quite satisfied with instability and conflict. Such environment namely presents fertile ground for the expansion of Russian interest in the region as well as a place on the international diplomatic stage. For example, the limited recognition of Kosovo has provided Russia an opportunity to present itself as a defender of legality and promoter of multilateralism in the international community. It also allowed the Kremlin to devise and inject the idea of a pan-Albanian fundamentalist menace in order to promote pan-Slavic Orthodox unity under Russian patronage throughout the region.³⁷

Besides the Kosovo issue, Russia also uses the Bosnian socio-political conundrum to stir up additional conflict. Moscow supports the leaders of the Serbian minority within Bosnia and Herzegovina and even retains the option of recognizing the autonomous region of *Republika Srpska* as an independent state.³⁸

A very important role of Russia as an influencing agent in the Western Balkans is the economic dependence, which the Kremlin is attempting to strengthen in the region. Moscow is utilizing means such as deployment of energy resources, providing state loans and business investment in order to secure a political hold in the region. In terms of energy, the Western Balkans finds itself in the middle of Russia's energy strategy—to

³⁶ Bugajski, 135.

³⁷ Ibid., 137.

³⁸ Ibid., 138.

build an energy transportation system connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean and Central Europe. Russia's desire to monopolize the flow of gas and oil through the region and into the rest of Europe is at the forefront in the Western Balkans.³⁹

Montenegro and its access to the Mediterranean are an important potential asset to Russia as well. There has been an influx of Russian presence in Montenegro over recent years, to include the purchases of various real estates as well as mines, factories, and other key infrastructure such as gas stations. This phenomenon is present in other countries of the region as well. Besides the energy sector, Russian companies have been very active in acquiring telecommunications, engineering, and banking interests in the region.⁴⁰

It seems that, in many ways, the Russian pressure on Europe and the push for a broader sphere of influence continues. Kremlin's influencing methods in the Western Balkans seems to be very similar to the threat that Moscow posed to the Baltic States in the early 1990s. One of the results of that threat was the creation of NG SPP in 1993 in the Baltic region. Now twenty years later, the successor of that threat is lurking at the countries of the Western Balkans. Among other actions and incentives, it will also be upon SC programs, such as the NG SPP, to bring the region together on a path of common goals and objectives.

Given these points, in terms of the physical environment, the region of the Western Balkans, with its location, inevitably puts itself at the position of strategic importance, both regionally and globally. As a multi-nodal linking point, the Western

³⁹ Bugajski, 138.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 141.

Balkans is of strategic importance to NATO and most notably the United States. It provides access to key areas such as the Near East, the Black Sea region, and the Mediterranean. If the current security void is not filled by the alliance and US efforts, there are other candidates, such as Russia, who are willing to step in. Russia is not the only other-than-Western influence in the region; however, it is the biggest and most likely stakeholder in the future of the Western Balkans. The Kremlin spreads its sphere of influence through diplomatic assertiveness, conflict prolongation, and economic dependence. Moscow has thoroughly analyzed the region and clearly identified their lines of effort for achieving their goals. It would be critical for the West to counter those three critical aspects of the region—political reform, conflict resolution, and economic development. The only feasible way of doing so is through engagement with the governments of the region and their institutions. Preferred would be an all-of-government approach; however, it should not be a US-only effort. It is critical at this point that the EU takes the majority of effort, whereas the United States provides the region with leadership and regional cooperation programs such as the NG SPP.

Conclusion

In the end, from the analysis of the security environment in the Western Balkans, through the lens of the operational variables, there is ample evidence to the strategic importance of the region. Only through a combined overlay of the operational variables is it possible to see the complete picture of the security environment in the Western Balkans. Moreover, the picture raises cause for concern as it answers the question of: does the region of the Western Balkans still matter?

In terms of the political variables, EU's backyard is still in visible disorder and needs some attention in order to fit in the European neighborhood. In order to prevent any escalation, a common and whole-of-government approach is needed in order to guide the region politically back to the gates of EU. The rise of radical nationalistic tendencies presents an additional concern for international actors to expand the influence of western values and promote democratic governance in the region.

As far as the military aspect goes, the analysis concluded that the most feasible option for collective security to all the governments of the Western Balkans is a path of integration into NATO. Of all the approaches toward NATO accession, a group bargaining option seems most appropriate as well as most rational. Most experts on the region agree that NATO is the best option for the continuation of reform and further integration into the alliance. The NG SPP could paint an important part of this picture as it transcends military affairs and provides an all-encompassing approach through partnering.

Economically, the region of the Western Balkans is showing signs of turmoil and in more encouraging cases stagnation at best. This situation opens a vacuum for instability and intervention by various third parties from within and without the borders of the region. With a comprehensive plan of economic guidance to include controlled foreign investment, the region would be able to provide a secure environment for the governments of the Western Balkans as well as international stakeholders. Without foreign influence, the future may look grim as the countries of the region are pushed back against the progress made thus far.

In terms of the physical environment, the mere location of the region gives enough cause for concern since it presents a crossroad of cultures, religions, and political aspirations. In terms of access and strategic location, the Western Balkans are a major factor for the actors of the international community such as the United States, EU, and NATO. Russia, as the competitor actor from the East, is not to be overlooked. Moscow's influence in the region is steadily growing and swaying the governments of the Western Balkans through the methods of diplomatic assertiveness, conflict prolongation, and economic dependence.

Step 2: The Story of the NG SPP

Introduction

The second step of the analysis explores the dynamics of the NG SPP as a SC program, specifically in the region of the Western Balkans. The question that this part of the analysis attempts to answer is twofold. The first part of the question is, what is the NG SPP? The second part asks, is the program meeting its original goals and objectives or not? The evaluation criteria will be the original aims of the SPP—promote access, enhance military capabilities, improve interoperability, and enhance the principles of responsible governance.

The analysis of the NG SPP in terms of the program meeting its desired outcomes is critical for a broader understanding of its effectiveness. Following the general analysis of the program, is a more detailed analysis of how the program's goals are measured. This detailed analysis is described in the next phase of the analysis, which measures the effectiveness of the program.

What is the NG SPP?

The NG SPP is a DOD SC program run by the NG. The program itself evolved from a EUCOM Decision in 1993 to form the Joint Contact Team Program, which was exclusively focused on the countries of the Baltic region. A following proposal from the NG to pair up NG units with the countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania marked the formal initiation of the program. What started in EUCOM area, soon spread throughout the other COCOMs. The SPP currently maintains sixty-eight unique security partnerships involving seventy-four countries across all regions of the world.⁴¹

Within EUCOM's area, the NG SPP links US states with partner countries for the purpose of supporting the SC objectives of EUCOM. Besides supporting EUCOM's Theater Security Cooperation Plan, the SPP aims at supporting several areas of potential interest to Congress (see table 3).⁴²

⁴¹ National Guard Bureau, Division of International Affairs, *The National Guard State Partnership Program, Annual Report, FY 2013*, executive summary.

⁴² HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 2.

Table 3. Areas of Potential Interest to Congress

1.	Helping prevent failed states and creating stable regions.
2.	Improving the capabilities of partner nations to protect their citizens.
3.	Strengthening relationships to facilitate access and interoperability.
4.	Improving cultural awareness and skills among US military personnel.
5.	Fostering the integration of reserve and active component forces into a ‘total force.

Source: Created by author using information from Headquarters, United States European Command, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 2013, 2, accessed September 5, 2014, www.eucom.mil/doc/25554/useucom-state-partnership-program.pdf.

In addition to the NG SPP goals and objectives, EUCOM states that their SPP also aims to promote access, enhance military capabilities, improve interoperability, and enhance the principles of responsible governance. All activities conducted through the NG SPP support EUCOM’s Theater Campaign Plan as well as specific US ambassador mission plans in their countries. The nature of the civil-military construct of the NG allows the program to conduct a wide range of SC activities (see table 4).⁴³

⁴³ United States European Command, “National Guard State Partnership Program,” 2014, accessed November 18, 2014, <http://www.eucom.mil/key-activities/partnership-programs/national-guard-state-partnership-program>.

Table 4. Examples of NG SPP SC Activities

Emergency management and disaster response.	Natural resource protection.
Border and port security.	Peacekeeping operations.
Leadership and non-commissioned officer (NCO) development.	Counter trafficking.
Medical capacities.	Counter proliferation.
Economic security.	Counter terrorism.

Source: Created by author using information from Headquarters, United States European Command, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 2013, 2, accessed September 5, 2014, www.eucom.mil/doc/25554/useucom-state-partnership-program.pdf.

The 2014 “United States European Command (EUCOM) Theater Strategy” provides new theater objectives and priorities for EUCOM’s AOR and coupled with the guidance from the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of Defense, these objectives form the foundation for a revised Theater Campaign Plan. The “Theater Strategy” stresses the importance of effectively utilizing the limited resources in order to present a force that is ready to meet the needs of crisis response in a time of continued global turbulence. The strategy specifically emphasizes the need to focus attention along the southern and southeastern flanks of EUCOM’s AOR as well as preserving fundamental relationships across Europe. In terms of regional cooperation, the Theater Strategy recognizes regional solutions across the AOR as necessary measures to meet the challenges. The strategy states, “increased regional cooperation on areas of mutual interest between allies and partners improves the security of Europe as a whole—

particularly in the Nordic-Baltic region, Central Europe, and across Southern Europe.”⁴⁴ EUCOM’s strategy also calls for more multilateral versus bilateral engagements in order to achieve success. EUCOM identifies the austere fiscal environment in which it has to operate and hence applies rigid fiscal discipline in prioritizing missions. In the words of General Philip Breedlove, EUCOM Commander, EUCOM realizes that in terms of the European allies’ view of the United States: “Virtual presence by U.S. forces will be translated by both friends and adversaries as actual absence.”⁴⁵ The EUCOM strategy deduces that the United States needs to leverage stateside-based rotational forces to supplement permanently assigned EUCOM components. In terms of the implementation of the strategy, EUCOM emphasizes the need to develop and maintain regional relationships that support our current and anticipated security interests and specifically points to the Balkans as one of the critical regions. Preserving strategic partnerships is one of the key theater priorities and is supported by maintaining regional stability and security as well as preserving partner capacity, capability and interoperability.⁴⁶

A closer look at the region of the western Balkans reveals that the NG SPP is not only present in every country of the region but very active as well. The longest lasting relationship in the Western Balkans started in 1993 (the second expansion of the NG SPP

⁴⁴ Breedlove, Memorandum, “United States European Command (EUCOM) Theater Strategy,” 2.

⁴⁵ General Philip M. Breedlove, “Statement of General Phillip Breedlove, Commander US Forces Europe, April 1, 2014,” United States European Command, 9, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://www.eucom.mil/doc/25632/eucom-2014-congressional-posture-statement.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Breedlove, Memorandum, “United States European Command (EUCOM) Theater Strategy,” 2-4.

since its existence) between the country of Macedonia and the Vermont NG. The latest addition to the NG SPP team was the partnership between Kosovo and the Iowa NG in 2011.⁴⁷ The amount of SC events per year confirms the above-average activity of the NG SPP in EUCOM's area. For example, compared to the countries of the Western Balkans, most of the region's neighboring countries had a smaller number of events in 2012 (Croatia and Slovenia had nine events, Bulgaria eight events, Hungary seven, Romania and Slovakia each had six events). The smallest possible number of events, as suggested by the NGB, in order to keep the partnership going is three per year. Since the numbers only indicate the amount of events, a closer look at the types of events and activities will help for a better understanding of the situation.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 22, 52.

⁴⁸ United States European Command, "Fiscal Year 2013 SPP Events," 2013, accessed November 17, 2014, <http://www.eucom.mil/doc/24602/fiscal-year-2012-spp-events.pdf>.

Table 5. List of NG SPPs in the Western Balkans

Western Balkans country	NG State	Partnership since	Number of events in 2012
Albania	New Jersey	2001	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Maryland	2003	19
Kosovo	Iowa	2011	16
Macedonia	Vermont	1993	17
Montenegro	Maine	2006	8
Serbia	Ohio	2006	16

Source: Created by author using information from Headquarters, United States European Command, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 2013, 2, accessed September 5, 2014, www.eucom.mil/doc/25554/useucom-state-partnership-program.pdf.

Albania and the New Jersey NG

The partnership between Albania and the New Jersey NG holds the support in accession of Albania to NATO in 2009 as one of the highest achievements of the program. This was also the initial focus of the partnership, and after the success in 2009, the focus shifted to reforming the Albanian Armed Forces from a conscription system to an all-volunteer force. Once this objective was met in 2010, the focus of the relationship aligned with the country's desire of joining the EU. In addition to assisting Albania with acceptance to the EU, the NG SPP is also helping with defense reform for the military.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 36.

The areas of cooperation have included leadership development, material management, doctrine, deployment preparation, and disaster planning. The events in 2012 included training in professional officer and NCO development, as well as material management (two events that year), and logistical support training and workshops. An important output of the partnership are also the co-deployments conducted by the NG and their partnering country. These undertakings develop over time and require a significant amount of coordination, willingness, and trust. In terms of outcomes, the co-deployments come second to a country's accession into NATO. In the case of the Albanian Armed Forces and New Jersey NG, they have already conducted five such co-deployments to International Security Assistance Force.⁵⁰

Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Maryland NG

The partnership between the Bosnian Armed Forces and the Maryland NG is acknowledged as one of the most important bi-lateral SC relationships in Bosnia. The NG SPP played an active role in the integration process of the Bosnian Ministry of Defense and their armed forces, as well as the successful transformation into an integrated multi-ethnic organization with a single chain of command and under civilian authority. The partnership successfully aided Bosnian Armed Forces in their transformation from a conscription army to an all-volunteer force. These efforts also represent the highlights of the relationship as the two partners look towards a desire of NATO accession as their next big goal. The partnership has also resulted in co-deployments of Bosnian military police and the Maryland NG military police to International Security Assistance Force in

⁵⁰ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 37.

2013. Co-deployments are one of the partnership's most important goals for the future. In addition, the counterparts want to focus on the possibilities in the interagency and whole-of-government realm in the near future. Specifically, leaders have identified education, health services/medical, and business development as potential areas for future collaboration and cooperation. Already, discussions have taken place at venues like the successful Balkan Business Summit-2011 held in Baltimore, Maryland, which could deepen and improve the state partnership between Maryland and Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵¹

Kosovo and the Iowa NG

The youngest partnership in the Western Balkans, Kosovo-Iowa NG, was established in 2011 with the long-term goal of developing the Kosovo Security Force and reforming the security sector in order to align it along Euro-Atlantic standards. This partnership is distinctive due the fact that approximately 700 members of Iowa NG have already been stationed in Kosovo as part of the peacekeeping force since 2003. The plans for the future of the relationship intend to focus on creating and developing an NCO corps, creating domestic operations (mostly focused on disaster relief operations), and to improve the overall readiness of the Kosovo Security Force. The activities in 2012 consisted of training events such as medical readiness training, best warrior competition, and participation in the Iowa NG annual training event. Other events were focused on leadership development such as a senior NCO refresher course, company-level command

⁵¹ Maryland Defense Force, *Maryland Military Department, 2012 Annual Report*, Maryland Defense Force, 20, accessed November 2, 2014, http://mddf.maryland.gov/docs/mdmildep/2012_MDMILDEP_Annual_Report.pdf.

seminars, and NCO policy and strategy development.⁵² Talks of the future also include an increase in military to civilian relations (mil-civ), and civilian to civilian relations (civ-civ) events such as agricultural exchange and economic ventures between the two partners. In 2013, Kosovo and Iowa extended their relationship to the highest civ-civ level by forming a Sister State Partnership signed by the governor of Iowa and the president of Kosovo.⁵³

Macedonia and the Vermont NG

One of the longest lasting partnerships in the Western Balkans, Macedonia-Vermont NG, has had a constant above-average number of mil-mil, military to civilian relations (mil-civ), and civ-civ events. The role of the partnership is to follow and support Macedonia's objectives to continue deployment operations and to meet NATO partnership goals in order to prepare for the country's accession into EU and NATO. The Macedonian Army is noted as the most advanced branch of all the systems of power that are considered when applying for NATO membership, in large part due to the synergy developed through the SPP. A significant indicator of the success of the partnership is the fact that over 2,400 Macedonian soldiers have already co-deployed with the Vermont NG in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. They were also the first foreign nationals to co-deploy with a US brigade. Beside the numerous co-deployments, both partners also consider NCO development one of their ongoing success

⁵² HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 22-23.

⁵³ Samantha Parks, "Iowa, Kosovo Form Sister State Partnership Through SPP," *National Guard Bureau: J5 International Affairs Newsletter* 2, no. 1 (Fall 2013): 4.

stories. Other aspects of cooperation include crisis management and disaster preparedness as well as support of the reserve force implementation. One of the highlights of SC events in 2012 was the participation in the NATO's Cooperative Lancer/Longbow Exercise, hosted by Macedonia. The SPP was actively engaged during this exercise in the planning process and exercise assessment. One particular focus of effort in the future is the Integrated Training Management concept through which Macedonia is committed to modernizing and enhancing the infrastructure at its Krivolak Training Area with the hopes of offering it as a Regional Training Site for other Balkan countries.⁵⁴ Macedonia and Vermont NG are also engaged in developing a medical capability (ROLE 2) for peacekeeping operations training, which could be used on a regional level.⁵⁵

Montenegro and the Maine NG

The partnership between Montenegro and Maine NG aims at improving in areas such as emergency management and disaster response, border and port security, economic security, peacekeeping operations, and counter terrorism. Montenegro has a strong desire for NATO membership and regards the NG SPP as the fast-track option for achieving that goal.⁵⁶ The partnership's events in 2012 included infantry tactics, extreme

⁵⁴ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 52-53.

⁵⁵ Dyana Allen, "Vermont Adjutant General Boosts State's Partnership with Macedonia," *The National Guard*, October 8, 2014, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/ArticleView/tabid/5563/Article/11383/vermont-adjutant-general-boosts-states-partnership-with-macedonia.aspx>.

⁵⁶ Angela Parady, "State Partnership Program," *Maine Army National Guard*, December 17, 2012, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.me.ngb.army.mil/news/archives/2013/01>.

climate operations, medical and flight operations, pre-deployment preparation, and others. The future plans for the partnership comprise of mil-mil events such as participation in multi-national exercises, enhancing collective-level training, and developing co-deployment opportunities. Both partners also want to focus on interagency activities in terms of domestic operations, such as management of large-scale disasters (through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency/Civil Military Emergency Preparedness), and Marine Patrol (for example security, navigation, harbor pollution). Additionally, Montenegro increased the demand for the development of civ-civ relationships through NG SPP in order to foster initiatives such as forest management, parks and recreation, and maritime studies. Another objective is to develop university interaction to include student and faculty exchanges between Maine and Montenegro.⁵⁷

Serbia and the Ohio NG

The partnership between Serbia and Ohio NG was established in 2006, and kept very active throughout the years. The relationship has progressed from basic familiarizations to multiple humanitarian assistance projects, medical forces exchange and participation in the Serbian Air Show in 2012. Serbia and the Ohio NG continue working on ongoing projects such as the continual development of Serbia's Peace Keeping Operations. Another prominent development, which has a great potential of contributing to regional security, is the construction and development of a training center (South Base) in Serbia. This is an enduring project with long-term plans and support. Two other continuing efforts of the partnership are NCO development and airfield

⁵⁷ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 26-27.

support of Peace Keeping Operations missions. Some of the more significant events in 2012 included leadership development (NCO development, inclusion of women in professional armed forces), humanitarian assistance projects, as well as Peace Keeping Operations Base Development and Assistance (South Base) and medical support to deployed forces.⁵⁸ The focus of the partnership in the future will remain on maintaining unit level exchanges, continue work on South Base, and increase the number and level of events in order to enhance security and prevent the local crisis from turning into regional conflicts as well as prevent violent extremist organizations from creating transnational threats.⁵⁹

Conclusion

From the analysis of the NG SPP, it is clear that the program is not only present in each country of the Western Balkans but also very actively engaged in the region. The nature of the program brings many assets to the Western Balkans such as enduring partnerships with strong relationships on local, state, and national levels. The partnership also has an intrinsic value of forwarding the countries' objectives and desires as well as promoting regional security in the Western Balkans. Looking at the situation though the evaluation criteria of the original aims of the SPP—promote access, enhance military capabilities, improve interoperability, and enhance the principles of responsible governance—the analysis shows that the NG SPP is indeed meeting all of the original

⁵⁸ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 42-43.

⁵⁹ Ohio National Guard, "Ohio Adjutant General's Department 2012 Annual Report," 13, accessed November 20, 2014, http://www.ong.ohio.gov/annual_reports/2012ONG-AnnualReport.pdf.

objectives of the program. The expansion of the relationships in the region from strictly mil-mil to mil-civ and civ-civ is an indicator of the NG SPP successfully strengthening ties with their specific country through a whole-of-government approach. In effect, this method is opening further options for promoting access to the region. In terms of enhancing military capabilities, the NG SPP is effectively conducting events, which foster the development of combat readiness, sustainable capability, and force structure. Examples of such events are the development of medical services, leadership development, support with organizational reform, and active participation in various exercises. Through every single NG SPP event, the partnership is improving interoperability of a specific country and their armed forces. Examples that contribute to this effort are the various exchanges of personnel and units, training and development of staff processes and tactics, as well as co-deployments, which represent the highest level of achieved interoperability. The promotion of the principles of responsible governance accompanied each partnership in the region from the beginning. With the expansion of NG SPP's mil-civ and civ-civ activities in recent years, and the increase of interagency support, this original aim of the NG SPP is being met as well.

Step 3: Measuring Effectiveness of the NG SPP

Introduction

The next step of the analysis is to answer the secondary question: how does the NG measure the effectiveness of its SPP and what are the desired outcomes? An extensive survey, collaboratively conducted by the State Department and the NGB in 2010, asked key strategic stakeholders for their perspective on various aspects of the NG SPP. Of the sixty-one embassies contacted, forty-one responded. All but one responded

that the NG SPP was valuable in meeting that particular embassy's goals and objectives. In a recent congressional testimony, several combatant commanders have commented favorably on the program.⁶⁰ The former EUCOM Commander, Admiral James G. Stavridis, told the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2012: "I think the SPP, dollar for dollar, may be one of the most efficient and effective programs that we have at our disposal as combatant commanders."⁶¹ There is ample evidence of stakeholders' praise for added value and success of the program. However, the question at hand is how specifically is the effectiveness of the NG SPP measured?

Even though this study does not analyze the intricacies of funding the NG SPP, it is nevertheless important to understand that the predominant reason for the need to assess and evaluate the program is to ensure the appropriated funds are used in accordance with their purpose. Of all the SC programs, the NG SPP has a very complex funding concept. Funding for NG SPP activities and events comes in part directly from Congress. The remainder of the funding comes from the states, the combatant commander's traditional commander's activities accounts, the DOD and the Department of State.⁶² The ownership and planning for NG SPP activities is largely in the hands of the COCOMs who also ensure that the NG SPP events are aligned with their theater SC plan. This part of the study analyzes the dynamics of how the NG SPP's effectiveness is measured.

⁶⁰ Kapp and Serafino, 16.

⁶¹ Donna Miles, "Eucom's State Partnership Program Becomes Global Model," *U.S. Department of Defense News*, May 16, 2012, accessed November 11, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116355>.

⁶² Jefferson P. Marquis, *Assessing the Value of U.S. Army International Activities* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2006), 86.

Issues with the Evaluation Process

In 2011, the Congressional Research Service report titled, *The National Guard State Partnership Program: Background, Issues, and Options for Congress*, identified the need to formalize the evaluation process for the NG SPP. These same findings appeared again in 2012 in the GAO report titled, *State Partnership Program Improved Oversight, Guidance, and Training Needed for National Guard's Efforts with Foreign Partners*. Both reports identified the need to develop SPP goals and objectives as well as evaluation methods and metrics to measure progress towards the program goals. The authors also recognized the difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of programs that focus on building partner capacity. Andrew Chandler analyzed these findings in 2013 during his study of the process of measuring effectiveness of the NG SPP.

The GAO report *State Partnership Program, Improved Oversight, Guidance, and Training Needed for National Guard's Efforts with Foreign Partners*, concludes with four recommendations for the policymakers and key stakeholders with regard to the NG SPP. Of the four recommendations, the first one is most interesting to the topic of this study and relates directly to measuring effectiveness of the program. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2012 mandated the GAO to look at the extent to which SPP activities are meeting program goals and objectives. The GAO found that the program lacked a comprehensive oversight framework that includes clear program goals, objectives, and metrics to measure progress against those goals, which limits DOD's and Congress's ability to assess whether the program is an effective and efficient use of resources. The recommendation was: "to improve the management of the SPP, the Secretary of Defense should direct the Chief of the NGB, in coordination with the

COCOMs and the embassy country teams, to complete and implement the program's comprehensive oversight framework by using the goals, objectives, and metrics currently being developed as its basis.”⁶³ The research conducted on this particular topic reveals that an implementation of the recommendation is still to be conducted. On the topic of this exact recommendation, the GAO database characterizes this recommendation with the status open. The explanation on the open status clarifies that the *Strategic Partnership Program Strategic Plan* is still in interim status, as it is being incorporated into the overall NG strategy, and is expected to be completed by the end of 2014. In addition, the Office of the Secretary of Defense is leading an assessment of the program that is supposed to result in a global plan for the SPP to ensure the program is strategically aligned with DOD SC objectives.⁶⁴ This thesis does not explore the findings of the work in progress in order to prevent duplication, it only focuses on the available and published sources regarding the topic of measuring effectiveness of the NG SPP.

In June 2013, officials reported that a *Strategic Partnership Program Strategic Plan* was developed in 2012, in response to GAO's recommendation, and the plan includes goals and objectives. However, the plan is still in draft form and in an interim

⁶³ US Government Accountability Office, GAO-12-548, *State Partnership Program, Improved Oversight, Guidance, and Training Needed for National Guard's Efforts with Foreign Partners* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, May 2012), 26.

⁶⁴ US Government Accountability Office, “State Partnership Program, Improved Oversight, Guidance, and Training Needed for National Guard's Efforts with Foreign Partners: What GAO Found,” accessed September 22, 2014. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-548>.

status until comprehensive strategic planning efforts are finalized for the NGB. Metrics were also developed but are still in the process of being finalized.⁶⁵

Current Available Metrics for Measuring Effectiveness

In the search for the ways of measuring effectiveness, it is important to find and identify the goals or the desired endstates of the NG SPP. According to US Army doctrine, while MOE and MOP help assess effectiveness and performance of the plan, it is critical to assess the strategic objectives and endstate. Without a well-defined endstate, measuring effectiveness loses its focus and does not meet its intended purpose.⁶⁶

Currently, the NGB identifies the following as the main goals of the NG SPP:

1. Build partnership capacity to deter, prevent, and prepare,
2. Build partnership capacity to respond and recover,
3. Support partners' defense reform and professional development,
4. Enable and facilitate enduring broad-spectrum security relationships.⁶⁷

The above-mentioned goals of the NG SPP have been in effect since 2008 and will most likely be adjusted by the end of 2014 in light of the GAO report's recommendations. Nevertheless, until an adjustment is made by the NGB, these are the goals the program is striving to achieve. They represent the guidance on what NG SPP activities and events should achieve. However, there is still a lack of direction as to what constitutes success or how the goals are to be accomplished.

⁶⁵ US Government Accountability Office, "State Partnership Program, Improved Oversight, Guidance, and Training Needed for National Guard's Efforts with Foreign Partners: What GAO Found."

⁶⁶ HQDA, FM 3-22, 3-28.

⁶⁷ Kapp and Serafino, 2.

Understanding the goals of the program and potential outcomes of achieving those goals is critical in the assessment process. Looking at performance and effectiveness measuring is the next logical step to understanding the assessment process. Measuring performance and effectiveness does not equal the assessment of the program; it is, however, an integral part of the overall assessment process. FM 3-22 defines assessment as a continuous process of every activity and operation and it generally divides it into three stages: monitoring, evaluation, and recommendations. MOEs and MOPs are defined as a form of criteria, which help determine progress in achieving endstate conditions, objectives, and performing tasks. These measures help evaluate a specific activity and the program overall. MOEs and MOPs require relevant information (mostly gained through continuous monitoring) in the shape of indicators.⁶⁸

Specific indicators are already in place for the NG SPP. They have been explicitly determined in DODI 5111.20, which establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides instructions for the use of funds appropriated to the DoD to pay the costs of authorized SPP activities. This instruction lays the foundation for NG SPP events and gives specific guidance on the roles and responsibilities in the conduct of events. It also sets in place a general system of reporting. This publication is significant because it defines what an SPP event is and it gives specific responsibilities to the combatant commander regarding the implementation of the program in his or her AOR. Such responsibilities require the combatant commander to review and approve all proposed SPP activities within his AOR; incorporate SPP activities as integral parts of theater SC plans; coordinate with relevant US embassy teams to obtain approval from the Chief of

⁶⁸ HQDA, FM 3-22, 3-28.

Mission; coordinate with the Chief of NGB in order to achieve the best use of NG resources; review, comment on, and provide coordination on all proposals to establish or disestablish partnerships; annually submit a detailed report of all SPP activities conducted within AOR; and assess the effectiveness of SPP activities in achieving theater SC objectives.⁶⁹ The specific indicators are mentioned in the reporting scheme and instruct the following:

The record shall include a detailed description of each engagement activity (including date, location, and details of each activity); the number of participants involved in each activity, including a description of the U.S. participants and their organization affiliation (e.g., National Guard in title 10 or title 32 status, by unit and grade); a description of the foreign participants, their status (active duty military or civilian), and their organization affiliation (e.g., strategist in the Ministry of Defense); the total cost of each activity; and a list of costs for each activity broken down by category (e.g., per diem, travel, and the cost of any equipment or materials purchased for each activity). The report shall also identify the funding source and legal authority for each activity.⁷⁰

As the above-mentioned indicators are mandated, they represent a common factor to all NG SPP partnerships. The indicators also represent potential outputs of the program. However, in order to understand the effectiveness fully one should compare these to the outcomes. For instance, a high number of participants trained in a particular SPP event could demonstrate high interest from that country in the training conducted or a solid foundation in that particular field of training. On the other hand, if the number of personnel trained is low it could mean that the soldiers of that country were either otherwise engaged operationally or were already trained in the mentioned subject. How

⁶⁹ Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, DODI 5111.20, 9.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 10.

one links the inputs to the outcomes is very important for clarification and a better understanding of the overall situation.⁷¹

With the indicators in place, how can the effectiveness of the NG SPP be measured? Looking at the US Army doctrine, the most pertinent information regarding the potential MOE for the NG SPP can be found in manuals outlining the Army's SC efforts and similar activities. One such doctrinal publication is FM 3-22 which provides doctrine for Army support to DOD SC. It explains how Army forces conduct SC and it codifies the NG SPP as a partner capacity building, SC program under Title 10 United States Code.⁷²

FM 3-22 provides examples for SC MOE and MOP. MOEs help the commander define if the unit is doing the right things, whereas MOPs helps confirm or deny whether a task is performed to standard, whether the unit is doing things right. These same MOEs and MOPs are restated in DA PAM 11-31.

These MOEs and MOPs are the most relevant for the NG SPP. However, even though these measures represent the framework for SC programs, the NG SPP is a specific case due to its inherent structure and outreach. The guidance in FM 3-22, and more specifically in DA PAM 11-31, is not the answer to the recommendations in the GAO. Without a doubt, the doctrinal guidance may serve as a foundation for the revision of the assessment process for the NG SPP, but to answer the GAO recommendation fully will require a coordinating effort from the NGB and the COCOMs. Due to the fact that

⁷¹ Andrew Chandler, "National Guard State Partnership Program: Measuring Effectiveness" (Master's thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2013), 50.

⁷² HQDA, FM 3-22, 2-5.

most of the planning and implementation process for the NG SPP comes from the COCOMs, it would seem reasonable to include them heavily in the revision of the assessment process for the NG SPP. It would also make sense to align the goals and objectives of the SPP with the COCOMs theater SC plan. Within a specific COCOM, regional alignment of goals and objectives of the SPPs pertaining to one specific region could help connect the efforts and resources and strengthen the region as a whole.

Additional Options for Metrics

Another way of looking at the effectiveness of the program is to analyze the assessment of the NG SPP from both partners' perspectives. On one hand we have the stakeholders from the NG SPP's side of the coin, which would include officials from the partnering state, EUCOM, the NG, and the embassy. On the other side we have the stakeholders from the partnering country and its institutions.

There is ample evidence of the US stakeholders' praise for the NG SPP, such as the US Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, during a House Armed Services Committee hearing, on 6 March 2014: "Those [SPP] relationships continue to be very strong. It will continue to be strong. It's been very effective and we look forward to find ways to broaden and expand it."⁷³ General Frank Grass, Chief of the NGB, commented on the NG SPP during his testimony to Congress: "The State Partnership Program is a joint SC enterprise highly regarded by U.S. ambassadors and Combatant Commanders around the world."⁷⁴ Various current and former combatant commanders attest to this statement and

⁷³ HQDA, FM 3-22, 2-5.

⁷⁴ General Frank J. Grass, "Statement by General Frank J. Grass Chief, National Guard Bureau before the Senate Armed Services Committee," United States Senate

agree with General Grass. General John Kelly, SOUTHCOM Commander, claims: “We rely on the National Guard’s State Partnership Program . . . [to] provide long-term mentorship to our partner nations to advance democratic principles and values and to encourage subordination of the military to civilian authority.”⁷⁵ A similar account is provided by the former EUCOM Commander, Admiral James Stavridis, who states that the NG SPP “is a very powerful tool. It is unmatched. They are, bang for the buck, one of the best things going. Anything that enhances state partnership is money in the bank for the regional combatant commanders.”⁷⁶ Retired General Carter Ham, former head of Africa Command, singled out the partnership between the Ohio NG and Serbia. NATO’s 1999 bombing campaign targeting Serbia had for years meant chilly relations between Belgrade and Washington. But since Ohio Guardsmen and Serbian troops began training with each other in 2006, US-Serbian relations have improved, and not just from a military standpoint.⁷⁷ The former Defense Minister of Serbia, Nebojsa Rodic, validated this

Committee on Armed Services, April 8, 2014, accessed November 20, 2014, http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/download/grass_04-08-14pdf, 10.

⁷⁵ National Guard Bureau, Division of International Affairs, *The National Guard State Partnership Program, Annual Report FY 2013*, 6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁷ Kevin Knodell, “Here’s One Cheap Way to Influence the World—Pair the National Guard with Foreign Armies,” *Medium*, November 4, 2014, accessed November 24, 2014, <https://medium.com/war-is-boring/heres-one-cheap-way-to-influence-the-world-pair-the-national-guard-with-foreign-countries-8f8a5190d0e8>.

statement and said, “Serbia's participation in the program also contributes to the promotion of the two countries’ bilateral relations.”⁷⁸

An important benefit of the NG SPP for the partnering countries is the development of disaster management. With a broad spectrum of knowledge and a citizen-soldier concept, the NG brings valuable experience to the partnering countries’ emergency management. An example is the cooperation between Macedonia Crisis Management Center and the Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. The cooperation was initiated and sponsored by the Vermont NG through NG SPP. The Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Director John Flynn, said, “This relationship with Macedonia through the NG has been mutually beneficial over the years.”⁷⁹ A similar situation is found in Montenegro. Montenegrin Army Lieutenant Colonel Ilija Dakovic said that through different joint activities, the SPP has helped improve the Montenegrin military capabilities and significantly improved the overall preparedness of the state to respond in natural emergencies.⁸⁰

A testament of the effectiveness of the program is also its expansion from strictly mil-mil events to mil-civ and civ-civ. The Iowa NG and the state of Iowa are bringing a

⁷⁸ Ivana Jovanovic, “Serbia, US increase military co-operation,” *The Southeast European Times*, July 4, 2014, accessed November 17, 2014, http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/articles/2014/04/07/reportage-01.

⁷⁹ Vermont Emergency Management, “DPS Commissioner and DEMHS Director Mission to Macedonia,” *DEMHS News* 8, no. 11 (November 2014): 2, accessed November 23, 2014, <http://vem.vermont.gov/sites/vem/files/November%20'14%20Newsletter.pdf>.

⁸⁰ Parady.

Whole of Iowa, Whole of Kosovo approach to strengthen this young democracy and create a prosperous and secure Kosovo by sharing ideas, strategies, and resources for economic development, education, public health, and security.⁸¹ The NG SPP expanded its relationship, which culminated in 2013 at the highest national level when Kosovo and Iowa declared Sister States Partnership. Kosovo's Ambassador in the United States, Akan Ismaili, said that he is excited to see the potentials that the state partnership between Kosovo and Iowa offers, adding that despite the fact that the sister states agreement was reached by the institutions of both countries, it is the private sector that should take the lead in further strengthening this relation.⁸² Kosovo holds the NG SPP in highest regard, Akim Ceku, the minister of the Kosovo Security Force said: "The National Guard State Partnership Program is our most productive relationship."⁸³

One aspect to consider in devising the MOE could be the partnering country's accession plan to NATO. According to EUCOM, one of the great contributions of the SPP is its impact on NATO accession in conjunction with other EUCOM force providers. Of the twelve partnerships initiated in 1993, ten have joined NATO by 2004. Two additional countries joined in 2009. In many respects, the SPP is the ideal vehicle to

⁸¹ Office of the Governor of Iowa, "Iowa Agrees to Form Sister State with Kosovo," June 2013, accessed 20 November 2014, <https://governor.iowa.gov/2013/06/release-iowa-agrees-to-form-sister-state-with-kosovo/>.

⁸² American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, "Iowa's Governor Meets AmCham Kosovo Members," August 7, 2013, accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.amchamksv.org/news-1375454517.html>.

⁸³ Jim Greenhill, "National Guard Program Enhances U.S. Global Partnerships," *U.S. Department of Defense News*, November 7, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=121074>.

facilitate NATO in the region.⁸⁴ Many aspiring countries, such as Montenegro, see the NG SPP as a facilitator of NATO accession. The Montenegrin Chief of Defense, Admiral Dragan Samardzic said, “The Armed Forces of Montenegro consider cooperation with the NG of Maine as well as the cooperation with the U.S. Armed Forces in general, very meaningful and of extraordinary quality. A large number of bilateral activities have been aimed at increasing capabilities of the Armed Forces of Montenegro for achieving necessary standards for a full NATO membership.”⁸⁵ The unique civil-military nature of the NG is especially noteworthy because it routinely engages in a wide range of SC activities, many of which parallel NATO activities. They include disaster preparedness, cyber security, anti-drug efforts, border security, and humanitarian assistance.⁸⁶

The assessment of the partnering countries on the NG SPP’s implications to NATO accession are similar. Slovenia, partnering with the Colorado NG since 1993, was accepted to NATO in 2004. The former Chief of Defense, Major General Dobran Bozic, concurs with EUCOM’s statements by saying, “The SPP and the Colorado NG played a major role in Slovenia becoming part of NATO, we have strengthened our ties with our allies and we our-selves became a stronger force in the Alliance.”⁸⁷ One of the newest

⁸⁴ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 5.

⁸⁵ National Guard Bureau, “National Guard State Partnership Program, Senior Leader Quotes, January-March 2014,” National Guard, accessed November 12, 2014, [http://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/SPP_Quotes_Jan-Mar2014_\(2\).pdf](http://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/SPP_Quotes_Jan-Mar2014_(2).pdf).

⁸⁶ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 5.

⁸⁷ National Guard Bureau, Division of International Affairs, *The National Guard State Partnership Program, Annual Report FY 2013*, 5.

members of the alliance, and also a neighboring country to the Western Balkans, Croatia, accredited the NG SPP with helping the country in becoming a member of NATO. The Croatian Chief of Defense, Lieutenant General Drago Lovric states, “[t]he cooperation between the NG of Minnesota and the Croatian Armed Forces has played a vital role in development standards and capabilities needed for our accession to NATO. . . I am pleased that this cooperation continues now that Croatia is a full member of the Alliance.”⁸⁸ Lieutenant General Steven Blum, the former Chief of the NGB, said that the invitation for Croatia’s full membership in NATO was a “recognition of the huge transformation that has occurred in modernizing their force and moving toward a NATO model. A good measure of that success is attributable to the successful partnership program between Minnesota and the Croatians.”⁸⁹ And the reason for attributing so much of the success of NATO accession to the NG SPP, according to Lieutenant General Blum, lies in the fact that “[t]he SPP has been a catalyst to accelerate the improvement and modernization and transformation of the Croatian armed forces towards a NATO model, it's played an essential role.”⁹⁰

Another country, which achieved full NATO membership the same year as Croatia was Albania, the first Western Balkans country to be a part of NATO. At the 15-year anniversary of the partnership with the New Jersey NG, the Defense Minister of

⁸⁸ National Guard Bureau, Division of International Affairs, *The National Guard State Partnership Program, Annual Report FY 2013*, 8.

⁸⁹ Jim Greenhill, “National Guard’s State Partnership Program Helped Croatia Join NATO,” *The National Guard News*, April 17, 2008, accessed November 21, 2014, <http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/ArticleView/tabid/5563/Article/666/national-guards-state-partnership-program-helped-croatia-join-nato.aspx>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Albania, Gazmend Oketa, said New Jersey provided critical assistance to help it reach its longstanding goal of NATO membership.⁹¹ Due to the fact that Albania is the only Western Balkans country to have already achieved full NATO membership, the NG SPP has a great opportunity to excel at preparing the rest of the NATO aspiring countries for the rigors of NATO accession.

Another prominent testimony to the effectiveness of the NG SPP could potentially be the culmination of interoperability in the form of co-deployments. Since 2008, soldiers from fourteen countries participating in NG SPP in EUCOM AOR have co-deployed with their respective NG partners to Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom.⁹² In his testimony to Congress in 2014, General Breedlove, the EUCOM commander, expressed his views on the NG SPP by stating, “Whenever I visit a country, the leadership from the Head of State on down praises our SPP work. Without the commitment of their state partners to deploy with them, many of these nations would have been unable to contribute forces to ISAF.”⁹³ The Chief of the NGB, General Frank Grass, commented on the co-deployment of the Maryland NG and the Armed Forces of Bosnia by stating, “We took a country out of war, and we worked together as they went

⁹¹ Wayne Woolley, “New Jersey and Albania Celebrate Historic Partnership,” *Guardlife* 34, no. 3 (December 2008), accessed November 18, 2014, <http://www.state.nj.us/military/publications/guardlife/volume34no3/7.html>.

⁹² HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 4.

⁹³ Breedlove, “Statement of General Phillip Breedlove,” 22.

from a consumer of security to a producer of security.”⁹⁴ Slovenia, a country just outside of the Western Balkans, has had a number of co-deployments with their Colorado NG partner, the former Chief of Defense, Major General Dobran Bozic, commented on their partnership by saying: “As a true testament of the friendship, we have deployed together to Afghanistan and continue to look for future military collaborations. Deployments are the benchmark of trusting partners.”⁹⁵

Most NG units partner with more than one nation, such is also the case with Ohio NG, which partners with Serbia and Hungary. Major General Gregory Wayt, Adjutant General of the Ohio NG, commented on their co-deployments with Hungary: “[i]t’s amazing to think how far we’ve come in this partnership, to a professional army here in Hungary, an army that’s well-respected in Europe and in NATO, to partner with them, and to deploy with them to a combat zone in Afghanistan,” Wayt said. “This is graduate-level work.”⁹⁶ The Ohio NG is following a pattern of partnerships that began conducting trilateral instead of only bilateral events. For example, Major General Wayt said, “We do a lot of exchanges together between Serbia, Ohio and Hungary.”⁹⁷ Serbia now plans to

⁹⁴ Maryland National Guard, “Maryland Celebrates Partnership with Estonia and Bosnia,” accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.md.ngb.army.mil/absolutenm/templates/?a=624>.

⁹⁵ Colorado National Guard, “Slovenia, Colorado Recognize 20 Years of National Guard’s International Relations,” May 27, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://co.ng.mil/media/releases/Pages/130528-SPP.aspx>.

⁹⁶ Jim Greenhill, “Ohio National Guard and Hungary: ‘Graduate Level’ State Partnership,” Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, September 17, 2010, accessed November 21, 2014, http://www.ong.ohio.gov/information/press_releases/2010/091710.pdf.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

deploy to Cyprus with Hungary for a joint peacekeeping mission. “That partly was brought on because of the SPP,” Wayt said. “Our ability to all work together has helped facilitate that deployment. There’s still a lot that we’re doing in Hungary.”⁹⁸

Conclusion

In conclusion, measuring effectiveness of the NG SPP is constantly evolving. The GAO exposed procedural deficiencies, which are in the process of being amended by the NGB. During the interim phase, the process of measuring effectiveness relies mostly on the available doctrine associated with the broader SC programs, as well as the guidance form COCOMs. Even though there is ample anecdotal evidence of the program’s effectiveness from both sides of the partnership, a comprehensive and standardized process for assessing the NG SPP is still to be completed.

DA PAM 11-31 offers guidance on how to record data in dealing with SC events and activities. The DODI 5111.20 gives specific guidance on the indicators—what to record when dealing with NG SPP events. These are both building blocks, which will provide the structure of demonstrating effectiveness of the program. However, there are still difficulties in capturing the right data and linking them to the desired outcomes. The reason for this issue lies in the nature of the NG SPP and its long-term and overarching reach, as well as the complexity of funding and oversight of the program. It will require extensive coordination between the NGB, the COCOMs and the country teams, to reach a standardized assessment process applicable to partnerships across the globe.

⁹⁸ Greenhill, “Ohio National Guard and Hungary: ‘Graduate Level’ State Partnership.”

From the analysis of the partnering stakeholder's assessment of the NG SPP, it is evident that there is ample support from the receiving side of the program. The most common benefits that the partnering countries mention in their comments are building their military capacity, extending cooperation to mil-civ and civ-civ events, and crisis management development. Two specific benefits pointed out by most representatives of the partnering nations were also support of their efforts in accession to NATO (except Serbia which has no such desires at this time), and engagement in co-deployments.

The analysis from part 3 of this study was only able to partially answer the secondary question. The reason for that lies in the unfinished policy on assessing the value of the program. Hence, this study was only able to analyze the current available metrics for measuring a broad spectrum of effectiveness as well as look at the assessment provided by stakeholders from both sides of the partnership.

Step 4: Regional Security

Introduction

The last part of the analysis focuses on the implications of the NG SPP on regional security, specifically in the Western Balkans. This part of the analysis attempts to answer the question: what are the current and potential implications of the NG's SPP on regional security?

Current Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans

Karen Yatto writes about the potential of regional programs within the SPP. Her study delineates benefits from regional cooperation not only for EUCOM and the partnering countries, but for the region as well. An example of successful regional

cooperation is the case of Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, during their accession process to NATO membership. The three countries had very similar needs and their goals were built around political, economic, security, legal, and defense resourcing approaches. Their needs were met on a regional basis and their bargaining power was substantially stronger due to their cooperation. They represent an open model for potential future aspirants to NATO.⁹⁹ Since many aspects of the operational environment spill across borders and are present in multiple countries of a region, addressing those issues with a single and well-coordinated regional plan leads to consolidation of resources, a cost-effective approach and creates a regional environment which fosters mutual cooperation.¹⁰⁰ A similar example to the above-mentioned Visegrad Group is the Baltic Group. Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania formed the Baltic Group in 1991 based on common interests and objectives. The group retained its function even after the successful integration of the countries into NATO and the EU, and still plays a role as a caucus to advance the region's interests.¹⁰¹

This same type of regional cooperation, with the same endstate in mind, has surfaced in the Western Balkans as well. In terms of NATO accession and available options, collective regional bargaining is the most feasible of all the regional security choices for the Western Balkans. The reason behind it is in the fact that a group of smaller nations, acting together, increases the chances of establishing a clearer, common

⁹⁹ The Visegrad Group, "About the Visegrad Group," accessed November 17, 2014, <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about>.

¹⁰⁰ Yatto, 16.

¹⁰¹ The Visegrad Group.

agenda and reduces the probabilities of miscommunication and misunderstanding during negotiations. Collective bargaining, by default, tends to bring smaller nations to the same table where previous disputes are resolved or compromised on.¹⁰²

In fact, analysis has shown that a regional cooperation initiative aiming at NATO accession already exists in the Western Balkans. The Adriatic Charter is a US initiative, founded by Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, and the United States with the purpose of eventual full integration into NATO and other Euro-Atlantic institutions. One of the aims of the charter is to strengthen its members' individual and cooperative efforts for domestic reforms that enhance the security, prosperity and stability of the region, and "promote the stability and Euro-Atlantic integration of all the countries of southeast Europe by bolstering political, defense, and economic cooperation among the partners and between them and their neighbors."¹⁰³ Bosnia and Montenegro joined the charter in 2008. In 2009, the goal of the charter was partly achieved as Albania and Croatia joined NATO. The NG SPP is linked both, directly and indirectly, to supporting and promoting the objectives of the Adriatic Charter. The construct of the charter presents a framework for further regional cooperation, which could be used by programs such as the NG SPP to strengthen their relationships and promote their objectives, as well as EUCOM's goals.¹⁰⁴

One potential problem with the concept of a bargaining group in the Western Balkans can be found in the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo. The two countries

¹⁰² Seroka, 508.

¹⁰³ Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, "Adriatic Charter, Fact Sheet," US Department of State, August 25, 2011, accessed November 17, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/112766.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

have signed a monumental agreement in April 2013, which aimed at normalizing relations between Serbia and Kosovo, and promised not to block each other's efforts to Euro-Atlantic integration.¹⁰⁵ A panel debate at the Central European Policy Institute concluded that, "despite high expectations, the 2013 Serbia-Kosovo Brussels Agreement has been far from implemented, while its application on the ground has been hindered by its inherent vagueness allowing for multiple interpretations."¹⁰⁶ This situation presents the NG SPP another opportunity to promote regional security through regional initiatives and an effort to bring the two entities closer together.

The NG SPP helps support EUCOM's regional initiatives and thereby contributes to the broader regional stability. An example of how EUCOM fosters regional cooperation is the Balkans Medical Task Force One. As recorded in EUCOM's 2014 "Congressional Posture Statement," General Phillip Breedlove stated that through this task force, EUCOM "assists the Balkan states build a regional, deployable humanitarian assistance and disaster response capability."¹⁰⁷ The NG SPP contributes to this effort through supporting the development of medical capacities in their partnering countries (in 2012 such training was conducted by the NG SPP in Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ European Union External Action, "Serbia and Kosovo Reach Landmark Deal," 19 April 2013, accessed November 19, 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2013/190413__eu-facilitated_dialogue_en.htm.

¹⁰⁶ Central European Policy Institute, "Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue: New Momentum Needed," accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.cepolicy.org/news/serbia-kosovo-dialogue-new-momentum-needed>.

¹⁰⁷ Breedlove, "Statement of General Phillip Breedlove," 12.

¹⁰⁸ United States European Command, "Fiscal Year 2013 SPP Events."

Another example of promoting regional security is the construction and development of South Base in Serbia in order for it to become a multinational center for military training. In fact, Serbia, in conjunction with its partnering NG, already conducted a multinational exercise on the grounds of South Base in June 2014. The exercise, Platinum Wolf 2014, which was aimed at peacekeeping missions, included service members from Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Azerbaijan, Macedonia, Croatia, and the United States. One of its aims was to increase partner capacity and improve interoperability. Serbia's partner in NG SPP, the Ohio NG, assisted with the organization and control of the exercise as well as with unit participation.¹⁰⁹

The issue of NG SPP supporting countries in their Euro-Atlantic integration has already been discussed. However, in terms of promoting regional security, the NG SPP can contribute greatly through guidance and targeted development in conjunction with their partner's needs and requirements on their path to NATO and the EU. Such was the case, for example, with Croatia, which gained NATO membership in 2009 and EU membership in 2013. Along with other factors, Croatian leaders also attribute the NG SPP to both achievements.¹¹⁰ Since the NG SPP's help in the accession of fourteen European countries into NATO has been a success story, the Western Balkans presents yet another opportunity for the program to present its effectiveness and promote regional security.

¹⁰⁹ George Davis, "Ohio National Guard Takes Part in Platinum Wolf 2014," *Ohio National Guard News*, July 1, 2014, accessed November 17, 2014, <http://ong.ohio.gov/stories/2014/July/070114-Serbia.html>.

¹¹⁰ Minnesota National Guard, "Minnesota-Croatia State Partnership Program," accessed November 22, 2014, <http://www.minnesotanationalguard.org/currentops/croatia/>.

RAF

In essence, the concept of RAF took several years to develop, and it emerged out of the need for additional forces in geographic COCOMs since the War on Terror demanded the preponderance of the fighting force to go to US Central Command. By 2010, the concept was known as the Regionally Aligned Brigade model and was designed specifically for theater SC. By 2012, the concept grew and evolved into the RAF. The expansion of the concept was mainly due to growing needs of the operational environment and the realization of senior military leaders that a brigade-sized element would not suffice. Many of the capacity building needs required by partner nations required specialized capabilities not part of a brigade combat team's force structure.¹¹¹

In an interview for the *Army Times* in November 2014, EUCOM Commander, General Breedlove, mentioned that EUCOM would need to supplement the forces in Europe with an increase in rotational presence of forces from the continental United States, to include reserve forces. This plea comes from the situation created by years of cutbacks and an increasing threat of instability along Europe's eastern border. General Breedlove also emphasized the importance of the NG SPP in assuring stability and providing an enduring presence throughout EUCOM's region.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Kristian Marks, "Enabling Theater Security Cooperation Through Regionally Aligned Forces" (Master's thesis, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2013), 10.

¹¹² Andrew Tilghman, "EUCOM Chief: More Troops, Gear Needed to Deter Russia," *The Army Times*, November 5, 2014, accessed November 18, 2014, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2014/11/17/eucom-chief-more-troops-gear-needed-to-deter-russia/18431785>.

The primary goal of RAF is to prevent war by partnering with nations within the region. The concept of RAF consists of brigades, divisions, and corps that are assigned to combatant commanders. These forces, both active and reserve, are generally US based with a small contingent present in their assigned region. Regional alignment is not a permanent assignment; units rotate in and out of the various regions.¹¹³ With more than twenty years of experience in partnering, the NG SPP presents a precursor to the current RAF concept. However, there are some significant differences and advantages that the NG SPP brings to the concept of RAF. The program's enduring partnerships are more or less permanent, whereas the active component of RAF is based on a rotational platform. This situation allows the NG SPP to foster long-term and enduring relationships, which can only be built through trust and continuity of time and effort.¹¹⁴ Major General Patrick J. Donahue II, Commander, US Army Africa/Southern European Task Force, concurs that the SPP really works. During a visit to Botswana, he said that while his active-duty soldiers were given a cordial welcome, "when the North Carolina Guard showed up, they were treated like rock stars. It's all about those established personal relationships, plus, the Guard has that resident expertise."¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Rosa Brooks, "Portrait of the Army as a Work in Progress," *The Foreign Policy*, May 8, 2014, accessed November 17, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/08/portrait-of-the-army-as-a-work-in-progress>.

¹¹⁴ David Vergun, "Regionally Aligned Forces Continue to Organize Despite Budget Uncertainties," *The United States Army*, October 23, 2013, accessed November 18, 2014, http://www.army.mil/article/113660/Regionally_aligned_forces_continue_to_organize_despite_budget_uncertainties/.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

NG SPP Implications

A way to look at and examine the current and potential implications of the NG SPP on regional security in the Western Balkans is to measure the NG SPP activities against the program's current goals and objectives. As mentioned in part 3 of the analysis, the current goals of the NG SPP are:

1. Build partnership capacity to deter, prevent, and prepare,
2. Build partnership capacity to respond and recover,
3. Support partners' defense reform and professional development,
4. Enable and facilitate enduring broad-spectrum security relationships.¹¹⁶

The above-mentioned goals have been described in a Congressional Research Service report titled *The National Guard State Partnership Program: Background, Issues, and Options for Congress*. The report also includes a more detailed description of each of the individual goals, which are explained in the following paragraphs.

The first goal (build partnership capacity to deter, prevent, and prepare), "focuses on activities designed to build [a] nation's or region's preventative capabilities to dissuade/avert attack or prepare for natural/man-made disasters, emphasizing civil military and interagency cooperation."¹¹⁷ Examples of the NG SPP's contribution to achieving this goal include military training at various levels as well as participation in exercises. One such exercise is Immediate Response, an exercise designed to deploy multinational forces in response to a disaster relief mission. The exercise also improves

¹¹⁶ Kapp and Serafino, 2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

NATO interoperability between US forces and participating nations.¹¹⁸ Immediate Response is an annual US Army Europe exercise, hosted by various nations in EUCOM AOR. Participating nations are supported by their NG SPP partners throughout the exercise.¹¹⁹ Another example of supporting this goal is the NG SPP's efforts in disaster preparedness training and development. In Albania, the New Jersey NG Homeland Security Center has conducted several events with the Albanian Regional Support Brigade and has also hosted Albanian teams. Disaster preparedness events preserve strategic partnerships, build partner civil and military capacity to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to disasters and trans-boundary threats.¹²⁰

The second goal of the program (build partnership capacity to respond and recover), "focuses on activities designed to build [a] nation's or region's responsive capability to respond and recover from attacks or natural/man-made disasters, emphasizing civil military and interagency cooperation."¹²¹ The NG SPP's implications in attaining this goal include such efforts as the development of the Peacekeeping

¹¹⁸ Opal Vaughn, "Immediate Response 14 Kicks Off with Team-building Exercises," *U.S. Army News*, August 22, 2014, accessed November 22, 2014, http://www.army.mil/article/132182/Immediate_Response_14_kicks_off_with_team_building_exercises.

¹¹⁹ Minnesota National Guard, "2,136 Soldiers train in Croatia," accessed November 22, 2014, http://www.minnesotanationalguard.org/press_room/e-zine/articles/index.php?item=3321.

¹²⁰ State of New Jersey, "New Jersey–Albania State Partnership Program," Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, accessed November 22, 2014, <http://www.state.nj.us/military/statepartnershipprogram/index.html>.

¹²¹ Kapp and Serafino, 2.

Training Center in Serbia (South Base) with the help of Ohio NG.¹²² In an interview for EUCOM, the Serbian Defense Minister, Bratislav Gasic said, “[t]he ministry of defence and the Serbian Army are committed to developing and strengthening regional co-operation and exchanging experiences with members of the armed forces of other countries. Therefore, our objective is to open the South centre to train members of the armed forces in the region and beyond.” A similar training area is being developed by the Vermont NG and the Macedonian Armed Forces in Kivolak, Macedonia.¹²³ The NG SPP is also contributing to regional security in the Western Balkans by supporting the development of the Balkan Medical Task Force One. General Breedlove, EUCOM Commander, said that the Balkans Medical Task Force One is an example of how EUCOM helps foster regional cooperation.¹²⁴ The Macedonian Chief of Defense, Lieutenant General Goranco Kotevski said that the capability “would not only serve as a support to operations led in peacekeeping conditions and wartime acts, but also as a support amid emergency conditions in the region.”¹²⁵

The third goal of the NG SPP (support partners’ defense reform and professional development), “focuses on activities designed to assist nations in transforming defense

¹²² HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 43.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 53.

¹²⁴ Breedlove, “Statement of General Phillip Breedlove.”

¹²⁵ Republika, “Headquarters of Balkan Medical Task Force to be Stationed in Macedonia,” April 11, 2014, accessed November 23, 2014, <http://english.republika.mk/?p=117154>.

structures and personnel to meet the challenges of the 21st century.”¹²⁶ The NG SPP is helping partner nations significantly improve their professional development through various efforts of officer and NCO development programs. These include exchanges and visits to educational institutions such as the case between New Jersey NG and Albania. The 254th Regional Training Institute has been conducting NCO/officer professional development events for several years which have also included Albanian Armed Forces sending teams to the 254th Regional Training Institute for instructor development. The 254th Regional Training Institute is preparing to conduct an officer candidate course exclusively for Albanian candidates.¹²⁷ A substantial contribution of the NG SPP to coalition operations and interoperability are the various co-deployments conducted in the past several years. Fourteen SPP nations have participated in multiple International Security Assistance Force co-deployments with their NG partner states since 2008.¹²⁸

The fourth and last goal of the NG SPP (enable and facilitate enduring broad-spectrum security relationships), “focuses on activities designed to build a nation’s capabilities to cooperate and collaborate regionally and globally on a wide range of security and socio-political issues in support of [the Department of State] and other lead agencies.”¹²⁹ The NG SPP is opening and expanding its partnerships from mil-mil to mil-civ and civ-civ throughout the Western Balkans. One such example is the NG SPP

¹²⁶ Kapp and Serafino, 2.

¹²⁷ State of New Jersey, “New Jersey–Albania State Partnership Program.”

¹²⁸ United States European Command, “National Guard State Partnership Program.”

¹²⁹ Kapp and Serafino, 2.

initiated cooperation between educational institutions. The Maryland NG and the Bosnian Armed Forces helped initiate an agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Maryland Medical System and the Clinical Center University of Sarajevo, establishing a partnership of teaching and mentorship between the two organizations.¹³⁰ Another effective effort from the Maryland-Bosnia partnership was the initiation of the United States-Balkans Business Summit. The overall purpose of the event is “to help reinforce broad-based and effective cooperation amongst the countries in the Western Balkans, strengthen economic and commercial ties between the United States and the region, and assist in the mainstreaming of all the Western Balkan countries into Europe.”¹³¹ Participants in the event include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia.¹³² Another comprehensive effort of the NG SPP is the promotion of participation at the George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies, where NG representatives attend together with their partnering nation’s counterparts.¹³³

¹³⁰ HQ EUCOM, *State Partnership Program 1993-2013, Twenty Years of Enduring Partnerships*, 31.

¹³¹ US-Balkans Business Summit, “Welcome,” accessed November 22, 2014, <http://www.usbalkanssummit.com/index.cfm>.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, “Guard Program Brings States, Nations Together,” October 24, 2013, accessed November 17, 2014, <http://www.marshallcenter.org/mcpublicweb/nav-main-news-en/62-cat-english-en/cat-gcmc-pao-en/cat-gcmc-pao-news-en/1084-guard-program-brings-states-nations-together.html>.

Conclusion

In the end, as the need for regional cooperation in Europe rises, the NG SPP is adjusting to meet those demands. Due to the programs' whole-of-government approach and the nurturing of enduring partnerships, the NG SPP is able to adjust to the needs and desires of their partnering country as well as meeting the goals and objectives of EUCOM. In answering the question of the current and potential implications of the NG SPP on regional security, a look at the record of activities and events reveals the answer. Currently the NG SPP is effectively conducting events in direct support of EUCOM's goals and objectives on a regional level. At the same time, the program is contributing to the stability of the Western Balkans through the promotion of regional initiatives, programs and developments. The NG SPP has immense potential implications on regional security in the Western Balkans due to its long-lasting relationships on all levels. It is a perfect fit for the concept of RAF, especially by effectively complementing the active component of the model. The real value of the program will show over time as the RAF is fully implemented and both, the active and the reserve components are conducting SC and engaging the region as one team. A comprehensive answer to the secondary question is best answered through the scope of the NG SPP's list of goals. For each goal interpretation, the NG SPP conducts several events, which promote regional security in the Western Balkans.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis in chapter 4 helped answer the secondary questions of the research thesis. It fully answered the first question pertaining to the importance of the Western Balkans as a region. The Western Balkans, due to its strategic location and

potential influence on the broader region, plays an important role in the aspect of broader security and stability for the EU and the United States. The current economic turmoil is an additional factor of potential instability in the region.

The analysis also helped answer the question of the implications of the NG SPP on regional security in the Western Balkans. It proved the significance of the NG SPP events in terms of building partner capacity and enhancing regional cooperation. The analysis also showed that the NG SPP's ability to contribute to the total force of the RAF concept is significant.

The only question left partially unanswered was the question focusing on the MOE of the program. Whereas the analysis helped answer the circumstances surrounding the issue of measuring effectiveness, there was a lack of available data for a more detailed analysis of the actual MOEs and MOPs by specific NG SPPs. What the analysis was able to show is the overwhelming positive assessment of the program from stakeholders on both sides of the partnership. The analysis also examined potential MOE for consideration. The study also did not intend to investigate in the current proposed process of assessment, which is still in revision and has not been published yet. This part is left for further investigation in the future.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Even though the US military's focus is shifting from the European theater to the Pacific, areas of potential instability remain in EUCOM's AOR. It is these areas that have the potential of escalation and if not tampered with may shift the region into a potential outburst, which will require immediate attention. Long-term commitment and support is of crucial importance in areas like the Western Balkans. Despite significant progress, the region was accompanied by political, military, social, and economic crisis over the past twenty years. It is yet again showing up on the radar as the economic situation worsens and political solutions are lacking. A mere stalemate of the situation may incite social upheaval and present a chance for radical political parties to gain their popularity through mass appeal.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of NG SPP in regional cooperation. The purpose is not to evaluate the justification of the program but rather to examine ways to leverage the program in order to better support national goals with an emphasis on regional security.

This chapter is organized in three parts. First is a summary of findings from the study's analysis. Second is a list of recommendations, which emerged as a result of the conclusions in the analysis. Last is a list of areas for further study. These are comprised of questions, which were unanswered during the analysis of this study, and questions that arose while researching the topic of this thesis.

Conclusions

From the analysis of the security environment in the Western Balkans, through the lens of the operational variables, there is ample evidence to the strategic importance of the region. Only through a combined overlay of the operational variables is it possible to see the complete picture of the security environment in the Western Balkans.

Moreover, the picture raises some cause for concern and puts the Western Balkans back on the map of regions that need the attention of the international community.

In terms of the political variables, EU's backyard is still in visible disorder and needs some attention in order to fit in the European neighborhood. In order to prevent any escalation, a common and whole-of-government approach is needed in order to guide the region politically back to the gates of EU. The rise of radical nationalistic tendencies presents an additional concern for international actors to expand the influence of western values and promote democratic governance in the region.

As far as the military aspect goes, the analysis concluded that the most feasible option for collective security to all the governments of the Western Balkans is a path of integration into Western alliances such as NATO. Of all the approaches toward NATO accession, a group bargaining option seems most appropriate, as well as most rational. Most experts on the region agree that NATO is the best option for the continuation of reform and further integration into the alliance. The NG SPP could paint an important part of this picture as it transcends military affairs and provides an all-encompassing approach through partnering.

Economically, the region of the Western Balkans is showing signs of turmoil and in more encouraging cases stagnation at best. This situation opens a vacuum for

instability and intervention by various third parties from within and without the borders of the region. With a comprehensive plan of economic guidance to include controlled foreign investment, the region would be able to provide a secure environment for the governments of the Western Balkans as well as international stakeholders. Without foreign influence, the future may look grim as the countries of the region are pushed back against the progress made thus far.

In terms of the physical environment, the mere location of the region gives enough cause for concern since it presents a crossroad of cultural, religious and political aspirations. In terms of access and strategic location, the Western Balkans are a major factor for the actors of the international community, such as the United States, EU, and NATO. Russia, as the competitor actor from the East, is not to be overlooked. Moscow's influence in the region is steadily growing and swaying the governments of the Western Balkans through the methods of diplomatic assertiveness, conflict prolongation, and economic dependence.

From the analysis of the NG SPP as a SC program, it is clear that the program is not only present in each country of the Western Balkans but also very actively engaged in the region. The nature of the program brings many assets to the Western Balkans such as enduring partnerships with strong relationships on local, state, and national levels. The program also has an intrinsic value of forwarding the countries' objectives and desires, as well as promoting regional security in the Western Balkans. Looking at the situation though the evaluation criteria of the original aims of the SPP—promote access, enhance military capabilities, improve interoperability and enhance the principles of responsible governance—the analysis shows that the NG SPP is indeed meeting all of the original

objectives of the program. The expansion of the relationships in the region from strictly mil-mil to mil-civ and civ-civ is an indicator of the NG SPP successfully strengthening ties with their specific country through a whole-of-government approach. In effect, this method is opening further options for promoting access to the region. In terms of enhancing military capabilities, the NG SPP is effectively conducting events, which foster the development of combat readiness, sustainable capability and force structure. Examples of such events are the development of medical services, leadership development, support with organizational reform, and active participation in various exercises. Through every single NG SPP event, the partnership is improving interoperability of a specific country and their armed forces. Examples that contribute to this effort are the various exchanges of personnel and units, training and development of staff processes and tactics, as well as co-deployments, which represent the highest level of achieved interoperability. The promotion of the principles of responsible governance accompanied each partnership in the region from the beginning. With the expansion of NG SPP's mil-civ and civ-civ activities in recent years, and the increase of interagency support, this original aim of the NG SPP is being met as well.

As the analysis shifted from investigating the NG SPP as a program to looking deeper into the assessment process, the study found that measuring effectiveness of the NG SPP is not conclusive. The GAO exposed procedural deficiencies, which are in the process of being amended by the NGB. During the interim phase, the process of measuring effectiveness relies mostly on the available doctrine associated with the broader SC programs as well as the guidance from COCOMs. Even though there is ample anecdotal evidence of the program's effectiveness from both sides of the partnership, a

comprehensive and standardized process for assessing the NG SPP is still to be completed.

DA PAM 11-31 offers guidance on how to record data in dealing with SC events and activities. The DODI 5111.20 gives specific guidance on the indicators—what to record when dealing with NG SPP events. These are both building blocks, which will provide the structure of demonstrating effectiveness of the program. However, there are still difficulties in capturing the right data and linking them to the desired outcomes. The reason for this issue lies in the nature of the NG SPP and its long-term and overarching reach, as well as the complexity of funding and oversight of the program. It will require extensive coordination between the NGB, the COCOMs and the country teams, to reach a standardized assessment process applicable to partnerships across the globe.

From the analysis of the partnering stakeholder's assessment of the NG SPP, it is evident that there is ample support from the receiving side of the program. The most common benefits that the partnering countries mention in their comments are building their military capacity, extending cooperation to mil-civ and civ-civ events, and crisis management development. Two specific benefits pointed out by most representatives of the partnering nations were also support of their efforts in accession to NATO (except Serbia which has no such desires at this time), and engagement in co-deployments.

The analysis from part 3 of this study was only able to partially answer the secondary question. The reason for that lies in the unfinished policy on assessing the value of the program. Hence, this study was only able to analyze the current available metrics for measuring a broad spectrum of effectiveness as well as look at the assessment provided by stakeholders from both sides of the partnership.

In examining the implications of the NG SPP on regional security, the study found that as the need for regional cooperation in Europe rises, the NG SPP is adjusting to meet those demands. Due to the programs' whole-of-government approach and the nurturing of enduring partnerships, the NG SPP is able to adjust to the needs and desires of their partnering country, as well as meeting the goals and objectives of EUCOM. In answering the question of the current and potential implications of the NG's SPP on regional security, a look at the record of activities and events reveals the answer. Currently the NG SPP is effectively conducting events in direct support of EUCOM's goals and objectives on a regional level. At the same time, the program is contributing to the stability of the Western Balkans through the promotion of regional initiatives, programs and developments. The NG SPP has immense potential implications on regional security in the Western Balkans due to its long-lasting relationships on all levels. It is a perfect fit for the concept of RAF, especially by effectively complementing the active component of the model. The real value of the program will show over time as the RAF is fully implemented and both, the active and the reserve components are conducting SC and engaging the region as one team. A comprehensive answer to the secondary question is best answered through the scope of the NG SPP's list of goals. For each goal interpretation, the NG SPP conducts several events, which promote regional security in the Western Balkans.

Recommendations

The second part of this chapter presents a list of recommendations that emerged from the analysis of the topic. This chapter presents four major recommendations dealing

with the lifespan of the NG SPP, a concept of a regional partnership program, NG SPP's role in RAF, and the significance of co-deployments.

The first recommendation deals with the lifespan of an NG SPP partnership. During the analysis of measuring effectiveness, a question emerged as to whether or not to terminate the program once all goals and objectives have been met. Assuming that the goals of a particular partnership are accomplished, the question at hand is whether that specific partnership should gradually dissolve or continue at a limited pace. Every program has a lifespan. Eventually it reaches its intended purpose and is gradually put out of place or re-aligned to meet the new needs and demands. The same question applies to the NG SPP. When a country has reached the intended capacity and the goals with the partnering US state have been attained, would it make sense to disengage the partnership in order to divert those critical SPP resources and funds to a new partnership? From a broader perspective of the NG SPP, no two partnerships are the same. The essence of a partnership is the mutual understanding and engagement between two entities. Moreover, since no two countries share the same dynamics of operational variables, no two relationships are the same. Some partnerships require more attention, resources, and funding than others. There are also a number of countries that do not have a relationship with a US state yet, but would desire one. With all of that in mind, it would make sense to rationalize resources and potentially close successful partnerships in order to open new ones or enhance the ones in need.

On the other hand, it is the long-term and enduring commitment that is the essence of any relationship, specifically an SPP partnership. A dissolving of a NG SPP partnership could open the door for a potential decline in partner capacity and would

undoubtedly weaken the relationship of that country with the United States. Hence, a more reasonable approach might be a limited engagement after the NG SPP has determined that a partnership has reached its maximum capacity and the goals have been attained in its entirety. What would follow would be a continuation of SPP events on a limited scale. These would be tailored to additional needs of the country and with the purpose of maintaining that relationship strong and open. In conjunction with this limited approach, if a regional cooperation between NG SPPs of a particular region were in place, the sharing of resources may have better effects for both, the program as well as the region.

The second recommendation is a proposal of a regional concept of NG SPP. With ample examples of how the NG SPP fosters regional cooperation and significantly enhances bilateral partnerships, a logical conclusion would be to link these efforts into regional activities or a regional partnership program. Individual partnerships aim at achieving EUCOM's SC goals and objectives, even through regional initiatives. If these efforts were to be combined, a sharing and pooling partnership between individual NG SPPs could ensue. This would in term save valuable resources and rationalize traveling costs. It would also bolster cooperation on a regional level; first, between different NGs, and second, between different host nation partners. The analysis revealed that certain NGs, which are partnered with more than one nation, started cooperating trilaterally rather than just bilaterally. Such examples are a good sign of extended regional cooperation and a potential way forward for the NG SPP. The analysis of this thesis presented the effectiveness of the bilateral cooperation between the NG SPP and their partnering nation. This bilateral cooperation is a remarkable example of a cost effective

SC program, which is investing all efforts into long-term and enduring relationships that build partner capacity and provide a safe and secure environment. Due to the evident success of the NG SPP, it is a recommendation of this thesis that the NG SPP expand its cooperation from bilateral to multilateral.

The third recommendation is geared towards the concept of RAF and the role of the NG SPP in it. In terms of RAF, there is a preponderance of evidence that attests to the positive reception of the NG SPP by the partnering nations, the question at hand is how will, in comparison to the NG SPP, active RAF forces be welcomed in the region's countries? The NG SPP offers a low footprint presence, an enduring presence, which over the years melted or merged with the local communities due to the building of partnerships and them turning into relationships, even friendships. With the active component of the RAF being on a rotational basis, there is a good chance those relationships will never fully develop or will at least remain colder. The NG SPP can help support those relationship if it presents itself as an integral part of the same concept, the RAF. In such case, the host nations might see the active component merely as an extension of the already existing relationship they have with the NG SPP and the Combatant Commanders will have an asset in the form of a total force at their disposal.

The fourth recommendation addresses the prospect of co-deployments. The co-deployments between the NG SPP partners not only represent a high level of achieved interoperability and integration, but also attest to a high degree of trust and confidence between the two partners. The program encourages deployments of partnering nations and helps bridge the initial deployment problems of many countries. Many accounts from both side of the equation, the NG SPP as well as the partnering country, confirm the fact

that co-deployments are beneficial to both partners. This thesis recommends the continuation of the co-deployments between NG SPP partners and potentially explore the expansion of deployments from bilateral to multilateral or even regional.

Areas for Further Study

The last part of this chapter introduces three areas for further study, which appeared during the analysis part of the thesis. Due to their magnitude, each of these areas would require a separate study in order to properly analyze the topic.

One area for potential further study is the upcoming publishing of the results to the GAO report's recommendations. These results will potentially introduce new guidelines for the conduct of the NG SPP as well as updated metrics for assessing the program. The new guidelines could be assessed against the current operational environment of the NG SPP and evaluated on specific cases. The new metrics for measuring effectiveness of the program could be evaluated against the updated objectives of the NG SPP.

The second area for further study is the concept of a regional partnership program. The increased regional cooperation drives individual NGs to work together in the same manner as their partnering nations do. A regional approach to conducting NG SPP events and activities could not only save effort but also time and resources. The effects of such a cooperation would be significant since only one NG SPP event could apply to multiple partnering nations at the same time. This concept has the potential of increasing regional cooperation and enhancing the NG SPP as an effective SC program. The essence of a regional partnership program is the shift from conducting NG SPP events strictly bilaterally to multilaterally and hence greatly expanding regional cooperation and

building partner capacity of multiple partnering countries at once. Such regional partnership program could potentially also expand the successful mission of co-deployments to multi-national deployments. For the NGs who already partner with more than one nation, this option is more feasible. In other cases, two or more NGs could potentially join efforts with their partnering nations and co-deploy as a group of NG SPP partners. The immediate benefits of such activities would be conservation of resources and efforts as well as building stronger ties between regional countries.

The third area for further study focuses on the security environment in the Western Balkans, specifically on their economic outlook. The analysis showed that the NG SPP uses a whole-of-government approach to great effect. There is significant variety in the types of NG SPP events, ranging from mil-mil, though mil-civ, to civ-civ. Among the civ-civ events, special attention should be given to activities, which promote economic development. The analysis of the security environment showed, that economic turmoil is a major cause of instability in the region. A comprehensive approach from the NG SPP, targeting this issue, is in high demand in the Western Balkans. The NG SPP could serve as an effective catalyst of economic development through the promotion of civ-civ events and enhancing business opportunities between a US state and the NG SPP partnering country.

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